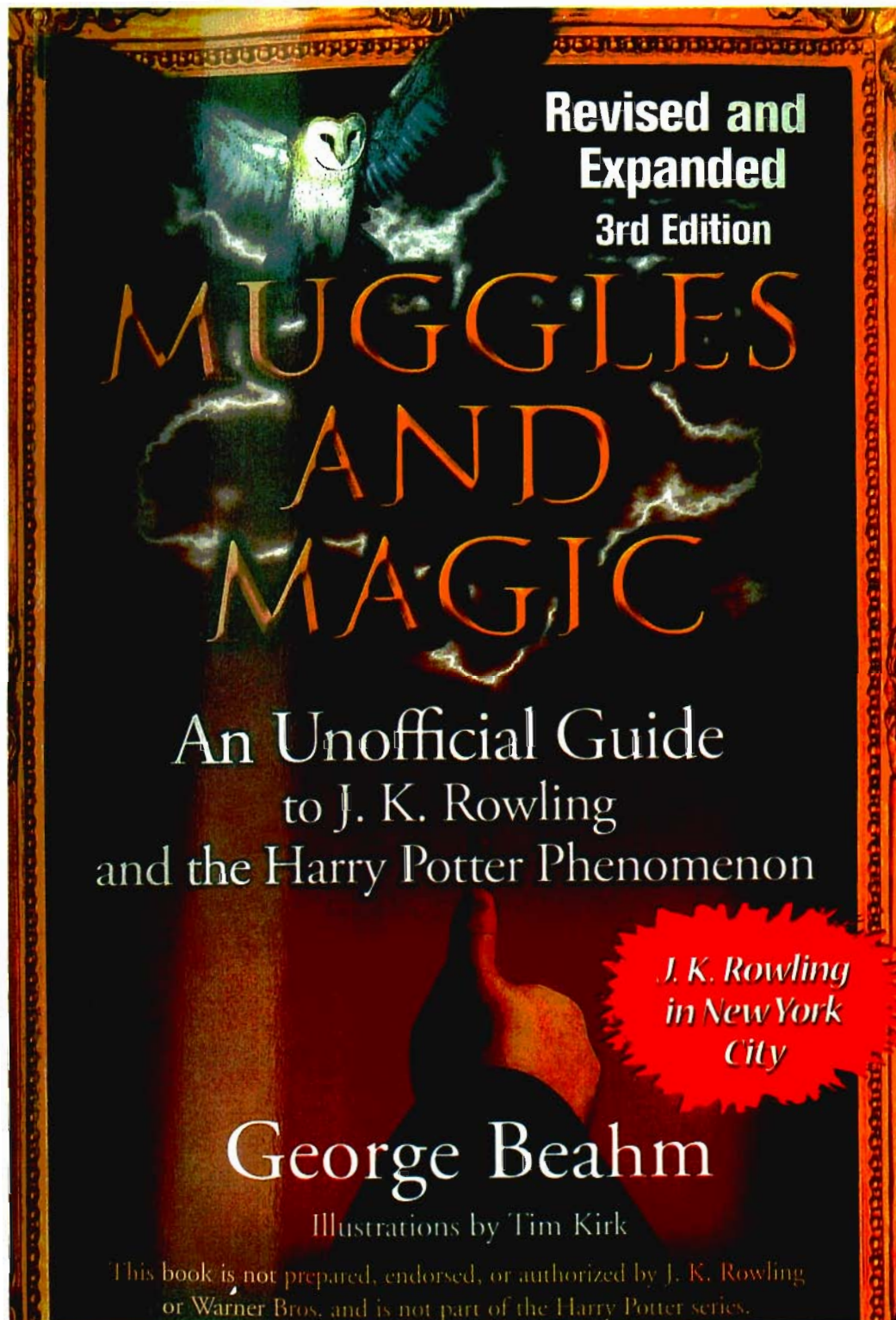


Exhibit E



Muggles and Magic: An Unofficial Guide to J. K. Rowling and the Harry Potter Phenomenon

"Gushing with enthusiasm and admiration, Beahm's compendium of Harry Potter trivia and essays should tide over fans waiting for book [seven] to come out. Beahm pitches the prose just right; . . . sophisticated enough to interest adults and lively enough to keep younger fans engaged."

—*Publishers Weekly*, the trade journal for the book industry

Celebrating a decade of Harry Potter in print, this companion book has been extensively updated, expanded, and revised—including exclusive coverage of Rowling's trip to New York City in 2006.

A best-selling bible for Harry Potter fans, this book tells you everything you'd ever want to know about J. K. Rowling and her most famous creation, Harry Potter, including:

- ♪ J. K. Rowling's fascinating life and, more specifically, her wildly successful writing career
- ♪ a behind-the-scenes look at all the movies released to date
- ♪ a detailed look at the Harry Potter books from *Sorcerer's Stone* to *Half-Blood Prince*
- ♪ a firsthand report and exclusive photos of Rowling's appearance, along with Stephen King and John Irving, in NYC in 2006
- ♪ the best Harry Potter Web sites in the Muggle world
- ♪ and much, much more

The cornerstone of any Harry Potter library, this book is essential reading for anyone who wants to know more—a *lot* more—about J. K. Rowling's life and work, and the world of Harry Potter.



Illustration by Tim Kirk, coloring by Britton McDaniel

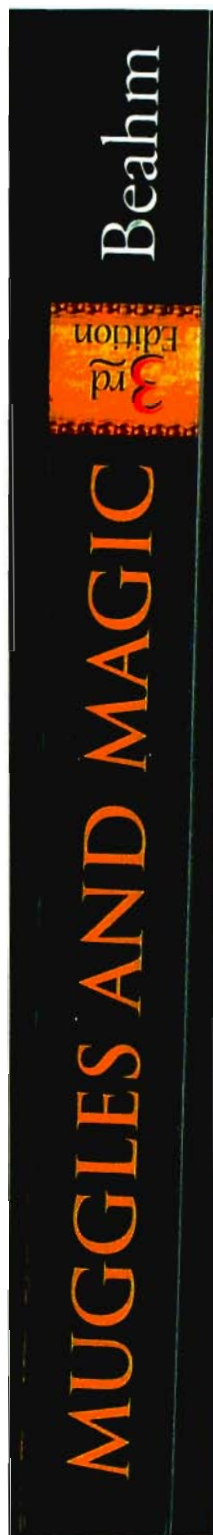


HAMPTON ROADS

ISBN 978-1-57174-542-2



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MUGGLES AND MAGIC

— Revised and Expanded —

3rd Edition

An Unofficial Guide
to J. K. Rowling
and the Harry Potter Phenomenon

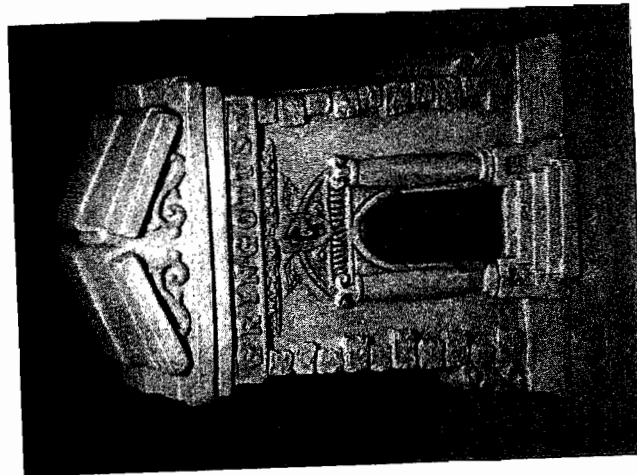
George Beahm

Illustrations by Tim Kirk



HAMPTON ROADS
PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC.

"You'll never make any money out of children's books, Jo."
—Barry Cunningham, then co-partner of the Christopher Little Literary
Agency, who pointed out to Joanne Rowling prior to the publication of
her first book that, for the most part, most children's book authors
make very little money.



Gringotts Bank



Contents

| | |
|--|------|
| A Note to the Reader | xi |
| Acknowledgments | xiii |
| Introduction: We're Off to See the Wizards! | xv |
| Part One: The Real World of Joanne Rowling | |
| Chronology | 3 |
| The J. K. Rowling Story, by Stephen McGinty | 7 |
| BRYONY EVENS ON SUBMITTING <i>HARRY POTTER</i> | 23 |
| Novel Places: The Literary Landscape of J. K. Rowling | 25 |
| MAKING YOUR WAY AROUND JOLLY OLD ENGLAND | 29 |
| Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs): | |
| General Things People Need to Know about J. K. Rowling | 31 |
| A Concordance: The People, Places, and Things in Joanne Rowling's Life | 36 |
| Give a Hoot! No Owls for Pets! | 43 |
| Footprints on the Heart: Catie Hoch and Joanne Rowling | 46 |
| THE CATIE HOCH FOUNDATION | 48 |
| One-Parent Families and J. K. Rowling | 49 |
| J. K. ROWLING ON BEING A SINGLE PARENT | 50 |
| Multiple Sclerosis and J. K. Rowling | 51 |
| J. K. ROWLING ON MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS | 53 |
| J. K. Rowling at the Royal Albert Hall in London: | |
| One Author and 4,000 Children | 54 |
| SCHOLASTIC ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS | 55 |
| The Art of Illustration: Mary GrandPré | 57 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| ALMOST £308 A WORD: ROWLING'S OUTLINE FOR BOOK FIVE | 220 |
| <i>Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince</i> | 223 |
| Magic at Midnight: <i>Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince</i> Is Released in the U.S. | 230 |
| <i>Quidditch Through the Ages</i> , <i>Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them</i> , and <i>Conversations with J. K. Rowling</i> | 233 |
| COMIC RELIEF | 234 |
| The Wizard Rockumentary: A Movie about Rowling and Rowling | 237 |
| Barry Trotter: The World's Most Famous Wizard | 239 |
| Notable and Quotable: The World of Book Publishing | 241 |
| The Final Exam: A Trivia Quiz for Muggles | 253 |
| Books about Rowling and Harry Potter | 265 |

Part Five: Spellbinding Storytellers—J. K. Rowling, Stephen King, and John Irving in New York City, August 2006

| | |
|--|-----|
| The Press Conference: J. K. Rowling, Stephen King, and John Irving | 283 |
| Read from Their Books at Radio City Music Hall (August 1–2, 2006) | 283 |
| The Haven Foundation and Doctors Without Borders | 297 |
| August 1, 2006: The First Night's Reading | 300 |
| August 2, 2006: The Second Night's Reading | 316 |

Part Six: Harry Potter Websites

| | |
|--|-----|
| The Official J. K. Rowling Site | 329 |
| The Official U.K. Book Publishing Site | 329 |
| The Official U.S. Book Publishing Site | 329 |
| The Official Film Site | 329 |
| Rowling's Literary Agent | 330 |
| Official Merchandise | 330 |
| The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) | 331 |
| <i>Publisher's Weekly</i> | 331 |
| <i>USA Today</i> Newspaper | 331 |
| The Harry Potter Lexicon | 332 |
| HPANA | 333 |
| Mugglenet | 333 |
| Immeritus: The Sirius Black Fan Club | 334 |
| The Leaky Cauldron | 334 |
| <i>The Scotsman</i> | 335 |

Appendices

| | |
|--|-----|
| Appendix A. Books by J. K. Rowling: In Print and Audio | 339 |
| Appendix B. Filmography and Videography | 345 |

| | |
|---|----|
| IT'S ABOUT TIME: HARRY POTTER'S COVER STORY | 58 |
| Muggles Visit the Wizarding World: HP Fan Trips | 61 |
| Harry Potter Fan Trip 2004, by Catherine Collins | 68 |
| Harry Potter Conferences | 78 |
| SOME TOPICS PRESENTED AT LUMOS | 83 |
| Collecting Autographs | 87 |
| J. K. ROWLING ON EBAY | 92 |
| Notable and Quotable: The Real World of J. K. Rowling | 93 |

Part Two: A Writer's Life

| | |
|---|-----|
| The Magic of Words: A Storyteller's World | 103 |
| WHICH POTTER BOOK IS BEST? A BBC POLL | 108 |
| Coffee and Cafés Fuel Rowling's Creativity | 110 |
| Harold Bloom, Stephen King, and Harry Potter: Strange Bedfellows Indeed | 113 |
| STEPHEN KING AT THE NATIONAL BOOK AWARDS | 115 |
| Harry Potter, Censorship, and Book Banning | 117 |
| THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION | 119 |
| So You Want to Be a Novelist? | 121 |
| Advice for Budding Writers about Writing and Publishing | 123 |
| A DOZEN TIPS FOR PUBLISHING SUCCESS | 123 |
| If You Like J. K. Rowling, Try These Authors | 127 |
| Notable and Quotable: On Writing and Publishing | 132 |

Part Three: Harry Potter—Screen Magic

| | |
|--|-----|
| The Power of Imagination: The Reality of Fantasy in Harry Potter | 143 |
| Notable and Quotable: Film Quips | 147 |
| <i>Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone</i> | 165 |
| <i>Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets</i> | 172 |
| <i>Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban</i> | 177 |
| <i>Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire</i> | 182 |
| Notable and Quotable: Film Clips | 186 |

Part Four: A Look at the Books

| | |
|--|-----|
| <i>Harry Potter and the Philosopher's/Sorcerer's Stone</i> | 193 |
| <i>Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets</i> | 200 |
| <i>Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban</i> | 205 |
| <i>Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire</i> | 209 |
| <i>Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix</i> | 213 |
| FAN TRAVELS HALFWAY AROUND THE WORLD FOR PHOENIX | 219 |

A Note to the Reader

This book is intended as a general interest, albeit unofficial, companion guide to J. K. Rowling and her most famous fictional creation, Harry Potter.

Though there are dozens of books about Rowling, Muggles, and the wizarding world in print, the biographies tend to be hagiographies, uncritical and gushing with praise; and the critical texts are written for academicians—students and scholars who perhaps hope to stake a literary claim. What used to be virgin territory is now well trod, as the fields of academe have yielded a bumper crop of books about Harry Potter, exploring every conceivable topic.

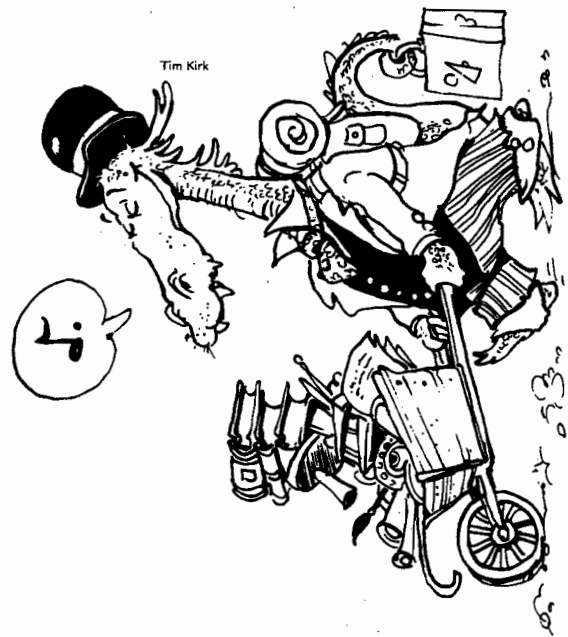
In my opinion, the publication of this book corrects a glaring omission in that line-up of books: one written for the general fan who simply enjoys the stories but wants to know more. In other words, it's a book for the rest of us.

Written especially for new Harry Potter fans—the ones who come to the books after seeing one of the film adaptations—this book necessarily covers a lot of ground. Organized by topic, it's designed to be dipped into, not read straight through, so there's some necessary repetition.

A Muggle's guide to the wizarding world and its most famous citizen, this book is your train ticket, as it were, to Platform Nine and Three-Quarters and the enchantment that lies beyond.



| | |
|--|-----|
| Appendix C. Key Collectibles: Books | 349 |
| Rowling in Dough: Peter J. Rowling Sells His Harry Potter Novels | 354 |
| Appendix D. Harry Potter Collectibles | 359 |
| Whirlwood Magic Wands | 363 |
| Appendix E. Whimsic Alley | 365 |
| Stan Goldin: A Wizard at Words | 366 |
| The Prophecy Fulfilled | 371 |
| About the Author | 375 |
| About the Contributors | 377 |



The J. K. Rowling Story

by Stephen McGinty

Before Harry Potter, before the novels, before the films, before the millions and millions of pounds, there was a little girl who liked to play witches and wizards. During the sleepy summer months, in the English town of Winterbourne, a half-hour journey by car from Bristol, Joanne Rowling, then six years old, first encountered a wizard called Potter. The game of Let's Pretend was played out in the front garden of number 35 Nicholls Lane, one of a row of grey brick, three-bedroom houses, into which Pete and Anne Rowling and their two young daughters had recently moved.

The game was Joanne's idea and involved raiding her mother's cupboard for costumes, the neighbours' garages for brooms, and corralling the children next door to make up the numbers. Joanne, her younger sister, Dianne, and friend Vikki were all witches while the solitary wizard was five-year-old Ian Potter. As he recalled almost 30 years later: "I used to wear my Dad's long coat back to front to look like a wizard. I think there were a pair of joke specs in the box as well—a bit like Harry's."

The life of J. K. Rowling began with the meeting of two strangers on a train in 1964. Pete Rowling was an 18-year-old soldier when he met Anne Volant, a WREN (Women's Royal Navy Service), also 18, on the train from King's Cross bound for the headquarters of 45 Commando in Arbroath. Introductions across the seated compartment led to a long conversation and stolen kisses beneath duffel coats. By the time they alighted in Scotland, Pete and Anne were a confirmed couple.

A few months into their courtship Anne became pregnant with her first

child (Joanne). The young lovers decided to discard their uniforms to marry on 14 March 1965 before setting up home in Yate, ten miles outside Bristol. Four months later, on 31 July 1965, their daughter was born at the Cottage Hospital, in the more affluent suburb of Chipping Sodbury, where Rowling would later claim her family lived. While her father secured employment as an apprentice engineer at a Bristol factory, her mother cared for Joanne and her sister, Dianne, born two years later on 28 June 1967. A year later the family moved to the larger house at Winterbourne, where Joanne first discovered the magical world of books and created her own adventures in the front garden.

A childhood bout of measles, at the age of four, provided the author's earliest memory of books, when her father raised her spirits by reading aloud to his bed-bound daughter the adventures of Toad of Toad Hall, from *The Wind in the Willows*. Books were spread around the house, crammed in every room, and although young Joanne had little interest in the adventures of the Famous Five, she would later praise the work of Richard Scarry, whose anthropomorphic work inspired her earliest work of fiction: a story called "Rabbit" written at the age of six. By this time she was a happy pupil at St. Michael's Church of England Primary School, five minutes' walk from the family home. But another move was afoot. In 1974 her parents purchased an old stone cottage in Tutshill, on the Welsh border, close to the Forest of Dean, which would become a blueprint for Harry Potter's Forbidden Forest, just as it had inspired the work of another local author, the late Dennis Potter.

The idyllic Church Cottage, which had a flagstone floor and a covered well, was just a goblin's throw from the local graveyard and was surrounded by countryside in which the Rowling sisters would enact their adventures. But for the young J. K. Rowling, the first day at Tutshill Church of England Primary School in September 1974 was not a success. She scored only half a mark out of ten in a test that led to her being positioned on the less intellectual side of the class. Her natural ability soon shone through and she was promoted, but as she explained: "The promotion was at a cost . . . Mrs Morgan made me swap seats with my best friend." The teacher, Mrs Sylvia Morgan, was a strict, intimidating woman, who frightened Joanne as a child and whose presence would work its way into the less sympathetic masters of Hogwarts. By the age of ten, Joanne was a keen Brownie, a voracious reader, and a serious student who raced to get her hand up first. "I was the epitome of a bookish child, short and squat, thick National Health glasses, living in a world of complete daydreams."

When she made the move to secondary school, Joanne found herself accompanied by her mother. After 12 years of bringing up her daughters, Anne Rowling secured the position of laboratory technician at Wyedean

Comprehensive under the supervision of John Nettleship, the school's head of science. Nettleship remembers Joanne, whom he taught, as a bright but quiet girl and considers himself an early inspiration for Professor Snape. "I think chemistry maybe made the most impact on her because I did teach her about the philosopher's stone, the alchemist's stone. Possibly she knew about it already, but I did include it in my lessons and explained how it turned things to gold." He then chuckles before adding: "It seems to have worked for her, hasn't it?" Although bright, she was not the most enthusiastic student, as Nettleship, who is now retired, recalls: "Her attitude in the science lessons was more like Harry's in the potions class rather than Hermione's."

Anne Rowling, meanwhile, was delighted to be around the beakers and chemicals and working once again after such a long absence. "She was absolutely brilliant, a sparkling character, totally reliable, very interested in words and stories and things like that. Although her job was on the technical side, she was also very imaginative," says Nettleship.

A brief encounter with bullying led Joanne to spend her break walking to the science block to collect her dinner money rather than face the intimidating atmosphere of the playground. A larger girl in her own year picked a fight with her. "I didn't have a choice. It was hit back or lie down and play dead," recalls the author. "For a few days I was quite famous because she hadn't managed to flatten me. The truth was, my locker was right behind me and it held me up."

Throughout her teens Rowling honed her taste in reading material. It is unsurprising that she was greatly influenced by J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, but she also loved Jane Austen, whose work *Emma* she has read more than 20 times. Another seminal influence was Jessica Mitford, whom she adopted as a personal heroine, and whose autobiography, *Hons and Rebels*, became a significant text for Rowling.

But as with all teenagers, Rowling became more and more interested in pop music. It was the early 1980s and so she was inspired by the Smiths and Siouxsie Sioux, whose look she adopted early on and maintained for many years; when she began university, she still sported startling back-combed hair and heavy black eyeliner.

At this point Rowling's home was a happy and stable environment. Her father, Pete, was now an executive engineer at the Rolls Royce plant and her mother was working in a job she adored. But things were about to change dramatically, casting a shadow over Rowling's life and tearing apart her close-knit family.

The spectre of her illness first appeared to Anne Rowling in 1978 when her hand began to tremble while she was pouring tea. At first the symptoms were fleeting and she dismissed them with a shrug but over the next two

around him by spending whole days in her room reading. During this time she read Charles Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities*, a literary discovery that may have influenced her alleged intention to kill off Harry Potter at the end of book seven. The death of Charles Darnay, sacrificing his life for a friend, and his moving last words—"It is a far, far better thing that I do than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known."—had a major impact on Rowling.

Anne Rowling attended her daughter's graduation in 1987 in a wheelchair and watched with pride as she was awarded a 2:2 in French. The next four years were to see her daughter work through a variety of temporary jobs including posts with Amnesty International and the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, a post so brief there is no record of her ever being there. During this time she began a parallel life as a writer, toiling over two adult novels, which were never published, and developing a passion for classical music.

It was while Rowling drifted aimlessly through these years that the most important moment of her life occurred. In the summer of 1990, Rowling's boyfriend had moved to Manchester and she found herself returning to London by train after a weekend spent flat-hunting with him. Quite spontaneously during that trip an idea took shape: "All of a sudden the idea for Harry just appeared in my mind's eye. I can't tell you why or what triggered it. But I saw the idea of Harry and the wizard school very plainly. I suddenly had this basic idea of a boy who didn't know who he was, who didn't know he was a wizard until he got his invitation to wizard school. I have never been so excited by an idea."

The birth of Harry Potter was followed six months later by the death of her mother. Anne Rowling passed away on 30 December 1990 at 45. Joanne had visited home six days earlier but had not realised the seriousness of her mother's illness. "She was extremely thin and looked exhausted. I don't know how I didn't realise how ill she was, except that I had watched her deteriorate for so long that the change, at the time, didn't seem so dramatic." The death of her mother sent Rowling into a tailspin. Within months her relationship ended, she moved into a hotel and would soon leave the country altogether.

An advert in the *Guardian* for English teachers in Portugal held out the promise of warmth and a fresh start. Rowling was soon living in the bustling city of Porto in a shared flat with Aine Kiely, from Cork, and an English girl, Jill Prewett. Between 5 p.m. and 10 p.m. the trio taught classes at the Encounter English School before heading out to Swing, the town's largest nightclub. Rowling spent her days in local cafés, sipping strong coffee and writing in longhand the first draft of the first Harry Potter. Maria Ines Augiar was the school's assistant director and became a close friend, remembering Rowling as a "very nervous person, anxious" and one who was

years her loss of physical control intensified. She began breaking beakers at work and often dissolved in tears of frustration. On a good day she could still play guitar, but the bad days began to mount up. When Joanne was 15, her mother was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. The disease was triggered by the lack of a certain protein in her spinal column, which served to scramble the signals from her brain and resulted in a loss of control of her limbs. Anne was brokenhearted at having to give up her lab technician's job, but busied herself by volunteering to clean the local church.

Rowling could only watch helplessly as her mother succumbed to this destructive disease. In an article the author wrote, published in *Scotland on Sunday*, she described how at one point her mother was reduced to crawling upstairs. The "galloping" progression of the illness meant that within a few years Anne Rowling moved from walking with difficulty to using a walking frame and then a wheelchair.

A depression settled over Church Cottage, leaving Rowling feeling trapped and miserable. Escape came in the form of a new pupil at Wydean Comprehensive, Séan Harris, who quickly became a firm friend. In 1982 he drew up outside the family home in his blue Ford Anglia and whisked her away from the grim stillness of Tutshill to the concerts and bars of Bristol. He would park under the Severn Bridge and together the pair dreamt up better futures for each other. Harris's blue Ford Anglia would become immortalised in Rowling's fiction as Ron Weasley's family car and he would be described in the dedication in her second book as "getaway driver and foul weather friend."

Joanne's academic achievements led to her being appointed Head Girl at Wydean and her ambition was to study languages at Oxford. Her A-levels in English, French, and German (two A's and a B) were good enough on paper to secure an Oxbridge place, but she wasn't accepted. Her teachers were surprised, believing she was the victim of institutional prejudice against comprehensive pupils. The dreamed-of spires of Oxford were instead replaced by the red-brick halls of residence at the University of Exeter.

Lecturers remember Rowling as nervous and insecure, but a fellow student, Yvette Cowles, told Sean Smith, her unofficial biographer, that she was popular and striking. "She wore long skirts and used to have this blue denim jacket she liked to wear. Jo was very shapely and she had this big hair, kind of back-combed and lacquered, and lots of heavy eyeliner. I think she was quite popular with the guys."

In her first year she signed up for French and classics, but an attitude to academia best described as minimum work, maximum fun led to her abandoning classics after she failed to register properly for an exam. Her third year was spent teaching in a school in Paris and sharing a flat with an Italian, a Russian, and a Spaniard. She found the Italian disagreeable and would

"desperate for love." Only after she had been resident in the country for 18 months did Rowling find love, albeit briefly, with Jorge Arantes, a dashing journalism student three years her junior.

Arantes was drinking with friends in Meia Cava, a downstairs bar, when, as he recalled: "This girl with the most amazing blue eyes walked in." He approached her, they began to chat in English and found they were both fans of Jane Austen. The night ended with an exchange of kisses and phone numbers and within a couple of days they were sleeping together. But if Arantes, who had an abundance of Latin machismo, thought he could treat her in a casual manner, he was mistaken, as his new girlfriend made clear when he began chatting to other girls while they were on a date. Rowling approached him and whispered in his ear that it was her or them. She won that contest, but a volatile passion came to exist between the pair. Against the odds their relationship continued, with Rowling providing money through her work, which Arantes spent while looking for employment he never seemed to find.

The couple had been together for only a few months when Rowling became pregnant, just as Arantes embarked on eight months' national service. They agreed that Rowling would move in with Arantes's mother, who lived in a small two-bedroom apartment on the rua Duque de Saldanha, and await his return. Unfortunately, the pregnancy ended in miscarriage. The disappointment brought Rowling and Arantes closer together and on 28 August 1992 he proposed. Friends in Portugal were taken aback when Rowling accepted.

Maria Ines Augiar believed Jorge to be both possessive and jealous, while Steve Cassidy, who ran the school where Rowling worked, viewed him as rough and untrustworthy. His perception was not altered by an incident at the language school prior to their wedding. The couple had been drinking coffee in a café across the street when an argument broke out during which Jorge violently pushed his fiancée. Rowling burst into tears and ran back to the school, but the intensity of Jorge's outburst led one onlooker to inform the police, who arrived to find a large crowd surrounding Arantes as he cried, "Joanne, forgive me, I love you." According to Maria Ines Augiar, Rowling was soon shouting back, "I love you, Jorge."

The marriage lasted 13 months and one day. Later, when Rowling was writing *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, she had one character, Professor Trelawney, inform a pupil that the thing she was most fearful of would take place on 16 October—the date of her wedding in 1992. The ceremony took place in Porto's registry office and was attended by Rowling's sister, Dianne, and her boyfriend. Photographs suggest a subdued affair with Rowling in black holding a bunch of deep red flowers. The girls' father did not attend. The speed of Pete Rowling's decision to move in with his secretary after his wife's death distressed both sisters and a fault line now separated them from their father.

The marital home remained that of Arantes's mother and was far from happy. Two months after the ceremony Rowling found herself pregnant once again. She continued her job and, worryingly, discovered she was losing weight due to the stress of arguments with Arantes. Prior to the birth of her daughter, Jessica, named after Jessica Mitford, on 27 July 1993, Rowling's friends were urging her to leave her husband, but she was determined to make her marriage work. Arantes's behaviour made this impossible. Rowling has never spoken publicly about her marriage, except to dismiss her former husband's claims to have helped shape the first Potter novel, with the withering line: "He had as much input into Harry Potter as I had in *A Tale of Two Cities*."

But Arantes has described his shameful and violent behaviour. The extent of the domestic violence Rowling endured is not known, but Arantes admits slapping her "very hard" early in the morning on 17 November 1993 and throwing her out of the house without her daughter. When Rowling returned the following day with Maria Ines Augiar, a policeman accompanied them and it did not take long before Jessica was handed over.

For two weeks Joanne and Jessica stayed in hiding with friends whom Arantes did not know. Then she boarded a flight to Britain and flew from Arantes and his terrifying temper. Her precious cargo included a cherished daughter and three chapters about Harry Potter, her surrogate son.

Trains run through J. K. Rowling's life with timetable frequency. Her parents met on a train, the idea for Harry Potter was first conceived on a train, and now, in the winter of 1993, a train carried both mother and daughter north toward a new life in Scotland. After arriving back in Britain, Rowling had nowhere else to turn. Her father had married Janet Gallivan, his secretary, and relations were strained, but Dianne had recently married in Edinburgh and swung open her door. Despite her sister's hospitality, the next few years were to be Rowling's nadir. Although never quite as bad as the press has painted in terms of poverty—she always had food and clothes, heat and light—Rowling did endure a deep depression brought about by circumstance and frustration.

For the first few weeks Rowling and her daughter stayed with her sister Dianne and restaurateur brother-in-law, Roger Moore, in their home in Marchmont Road, but it was an arrangement that could not continue indefinitely. Social services organised a small flat at 28 Gardner's Crescent. So began Rowling's experience of government bureaucracy as she was forced to fill in endless forms and attend demeaning interviews in order to secure a weekly allowance of £69. A Christmas present she received, REM's new album *Automatic for the People*, only added to the gloom. The album was reviled by critics as REM's nihilistic best and Rowling seized on the spirit-lifting track "Everybody Hurts," which she began to play incessantly.

The new year brought with it a new flat, but her depression deepened. Shortly after her return to Britain her old friend Séan Harris had offered to

W bridge, whose much patronised back room has windows overlooking Greyfriars cemetery. A sign at the entrance now reads: "Experience the same atmosphere that J. K. Rowling did as she mulled over a coffee, writing the first Harry Potter novel."

The writing of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* was slow. Rowling wrote in longhand then typed up the finished work on a secondhand manual typewriter. In the meantime she needed a job. At first she took on secretarial work for a few hours each week, but a full-time job was a necessity. She wanted a career, not just a means to make money, and so applied to study for a Postgraduate Certificate of Education in modern languages at Moray House, now part of Edinburgh University. A generous friend supplemented a small grant and in August 1995 she became a student once again. Staff at St David's High School on Dalkeith Road and Leith Academy, where she taught as part of her teaching training, remember her as keen and well-organised. She graduated in June 1996, around which time she heard the news that Harry Potter was to be published at last.

In early 1996, with the manuscript of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* complete, Rowling visited Edinburgh Central Library to look up the *Writers' and Artists' Year Book* in search of a literary agent. Her first approach had been unsuccessful: a brief rejection letter. She then posted a sample of three chapters and a cover letter to the Christopher Little Literary Agency, based in Fulham. It was here that a young reader, Bryony Evens, read the first chapter and laughed. Evens passed the chapters to Fleur Howle, a freelance reader, who agreed with her assessment and together they persuaded Little to sign up Rowling. A few days later Rowling received a letter asking for the remainder of the manuscript. The agency sent Rowling's 200-page manuscript to 12 publishers, all of whom, to their eternal regret, turned down the book. HarperCollins showed interest but was too slow in formulating a bid and so the first book by the most lucrative writer in the world was picked up by Bloomsbury for an advance of £1,500.

When Barry Cunningham, head of children's fiction at Bloomsbury, invited Rowling to lunch in London, he praised her book but told her to be prepared as there was no financial reward in children's books. Rowling did not care. To hold a hardback copy in her hand was reward enough.

Anxious to finish the second novel, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, Rowling applied for a grant from the Scottish Arts Council and was awarded £8,000, which allowed her to purchase a word processor and steady her turbulent finances. The publication date for *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* was set at 26 June 1997 and Joanne Rowling was rechristened J. K. Rowling. Christopher Little had discovered that boys were unlikely to read a book written by a woman and so pushed for Bloomsbury to use the ambiguous initials in order to attract both sexes.

lend her money, but she refused. By midwinter she was so unhappy in Gardner's Crescent that she changed her mind and borrowed £600 from him to use as a deposit on a rented flat. Finding one was more difficult than she thought and it was only after enduring rejection after rejection from owners unwilling to rent to an unemployed single mother that she secured the keys to a flat in South Lorne Place. It was a pebbled and brick-faced four-story flat, furnished thanks to contributions from friends.

It was here that Rowling was overcome by a feeling of hopelessness. Her despair was compounded by the arrival in March 1994 of her estranged husband in search of his wife and daughter. Since Rowling's departure from Porto, Arantes had succumbed to drug abuse and his wife was so concerned for the safety of herself and her daughter that she was forced to obtain an Action of Interdict, an order of restraint that prevented Arantes from "molesting, abusing her verbally, threatening her or putting her in a state of fear and alarm by using violence toward her anywhere within the sheriffdom of Edinburgh." Arantes returned to Portugal and Rowling filed for divorce in August 1994.

The sense that she was failing her daughter was unbearable to Rowling. Whenever she visited the homes of other mothers, Rowling gazed covetously at their children's bright bundles of toys. Her own daughter's toys could fit comfortably in a shoe box. Yet when an insensitive, if well-meaning, health visitor brought around a raggedy teddy bear and a small plastic phone, she junked them in a fit of shame.

Only after a period of counselling was she able to tackle her depression and begin writing again. But once she did, it was the writing that elevated her self-worth. The first three chapters of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* had made her sister laugh, a reaction that kindled hope in Rowling. In the long evenings at home, with little else to do, she set about working on further chapters. In the mythology of J. K. Rowling, Nicolson's restaurant is where the majority of Harry Potter was written. Yet the brightly coloured restaurant has now gone, long since replaced by a Chinese restaurant, King's Buffet. The new owner, Winnie Yau, still receives pilgrims from all over the world, asking about the building's most famous customer.

Rowling went to Nicolson's either as a respite from a freezing flat or through a passion for good coffee, depending on which version you believe. Nicolson's was scarcely convenient, half a mile from her flat and at the top of 20 steps, quite a hike for a mother with a young child in a push-chair, but it was owned by her brother-in-law, which allowed her to draw out a single coffee over a few hours, and the primary colours in which it was painted couldn't help but lift the spirits of even the most despondent visitor. A second establishment she visited regularly was the Elephant House, on George

But before Harry Potter and Hagrid, Hermione and Ron Weasley, Professors Albus Dumbledore and Severus Snape could bewitch the children of Britain, they had cast a collective spell over an American publisher. Arthur Levine, the editorial director of Scholastic, a large American publishing house, first read the novel at 36,000 feet as he flew over the Atlantic to attend the Bologna Book Fair. He became so engrossed that he had no wish to land. Little had organised an auction for the American publishing rights to Harry Potter and Levine became determined to be the highest bidder. Three days after the British publication date, Rowling received a call from her agent to say that Scholastic had bid \$100,000—an unprecedented sum—for a children's book that already had the makings of a phenomenon.

In the Eye of the Storm

In the autumn of 1999 J. K. Rowling arrived in America for yet another nationwide tour. *The Prisoner of Azkaban*, her third novel in as many years, had just been released three months after its British edition, a delay that had caused thousands of eager Americans to order Bloomsbury editions over the Internet. Her American publishers, Scholastic, were anxious to develop Rowling's profile with a series of book-signing sessions. Previous tours in 1997 and 1998 had seen the number of excited children and patient parents rise from dozens to a few hundred. No one expected to see thousands.

When Rowling's black Lincoln arrived at Politics and Prose, a popular bookstore in Washington, D.C., and Rowling saw a queue that snaked out the door and two blocks back, she assumed there was some kind of sale. On that visit she managed to sign 1,400 copies before her handlers dragged her on to the next event. The same delighted crowds of children and, for the first time, unaccompanied adults, met her at every city on the tour. Chat-show hosts such as Katie Couric of the *Today Show* and Rosie O'Donnell were delighted to share their sofas with the hottest author in America.

In the season of Halloween, Harry Potter reached critical mass and exploded. Across the country six giant printing presses were spinning 24 hours a day to maintain demand for his three adventures. The *New York Times* had J. K. Rowling at the first three slots on their best-seller lists and would eventually have to create a new children's book list in order to evict her. *Time* magazine placed the boy wizard in the company of world leaders when it granted him a cover story. When embarking on the writer's life, the height of Rowling's ambition was for a sales assistant to recognise her name off her credit card and declare herself a fan. "In my wildest fantasy I could not have imagined anything like this," she told Katie Couric on the *Today Show* that autumn. "I could not even come close."

In Britain the books had been a slow steady burn. *Harry Potter and the*

Harry Potter Fan Trip 2004

by Catherine Collins

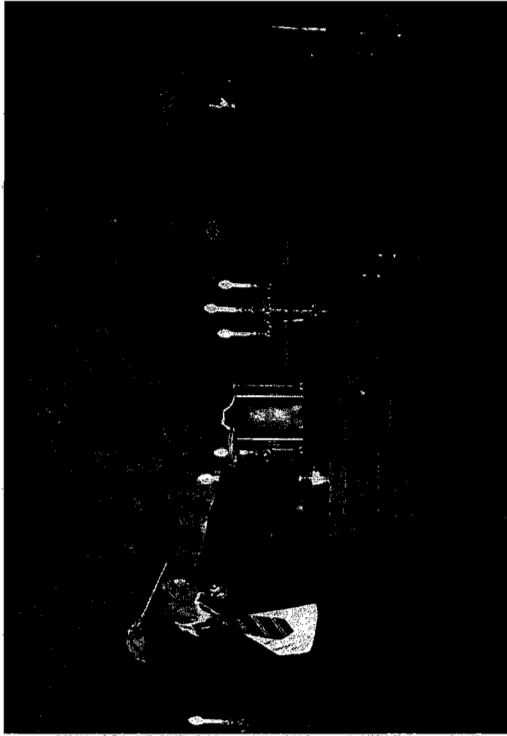
In the Beginning

On Tuesday, June 1, 2004, the very first HP Fan Trip began. This spectacular event, spanning five magical days in York and London, England, took excited Harry Potter fans into the boy wizard's very own world.

A chance meeting at Nimbus 2003, the first-ever Harry Potter symposium, led to the birth of HP Fan Trips. It is the brainchild of Jeff Guillaume, webmaster of HPANA; Heidi Tandy, editor at The Leaky Cauldron and cofounder of FictionAlley; and Jeannie Barresi, managing director of the travel company Beyond Boundaries. All three wanted to give Harry Potter fans an opportunity to experience the world J. K. Rowling created within the pages of her books. The idea is to allow fans to step into Harry's shoes for a few



The Hogwarts Express steam engine (#5972) used in the Harry Potter films



A wizard's duel: Eric of Mugglenet.com and Wirta square off, wands at the ready

days and to live his life: attend herbology class, play Quidditch, and ride on the Hogwarts Express. The goal is to have them come away feeling closer to Harry and knowing him a bit better. In addition to that, participants learn about the rich history of British literature and experience the culture that inspired great works of art.

According to Jeannie Barresi:

The trip has always had the vision of integrating the myths and legends of England into the Harry Potter experience. These myths and legends inspired J. K. Rowling and many other fantasy writers. We wouldn't have Harry, for example, without the legend of Merlin, Padfoot, the Hand of Glory, Tolkien's world, the Loch Ness Monster, and all sorts of mythical creatures and characters. So the point is to see the culture, history, landscape, and stories of this culture filtered through the eyes of a literary character. This makes for a richer experience in that we all share a common language, all the phrases and stories in the Harry Potter books, and can then leap from the pages of the book to the reality/historical fantasy in which the character was conceived.*

Jeff Guillaume of HPANA, Eric Scull of MuggleNet, and Catherine Collins of HarryPotterFanZone and TheDarkLord.net joined forces to document the fan trip with daily videos, a photo gallery, and reportage.

*For more information on the folklore, myths, and legends found in the Harry Potter novels, consult *Fact, Fiction, and Folklore: An Unofficial Guide* by George Beahm.

Pre-Trip: The Build-Up

Planning this trip took close to a year. Jeff worked tirelessly with Jeannie and Heidi to create an unforgettable Harry Potter fan's dream vacation. Midway through the planning, I jumped on board to help organize the chaperone program for teenage guests traveling without a guardian. Eric joined to create promotional material for the travel company. For the participants' enjoyment, Eric created in-depth trivia questions.

In mid-March, Beyond Boundaries set up a message board to give those already signed up for the trip an opportunity to get to know one another. Many took advantage of this, and by the time we were ready to depart for the trip, more than a thousand messages had been posted. Participants discussed everything from finding a roommate, to traveling tips, to who would be bringing robes.

The last couple of weeks were spent finalizing trip details. At last, May 31 arrived and it was time to leave for the airport. Eric and I would be traveling together, and we planned to meet Jeff in London. Everything went smoothly and our plane took off at eight in the evening. For fun, we played about twenty games of Harry Potter Uno. We could barely contain our excitement by the time our six-hour flight was over. We couldn't wait to exit the plane and begin the trip!

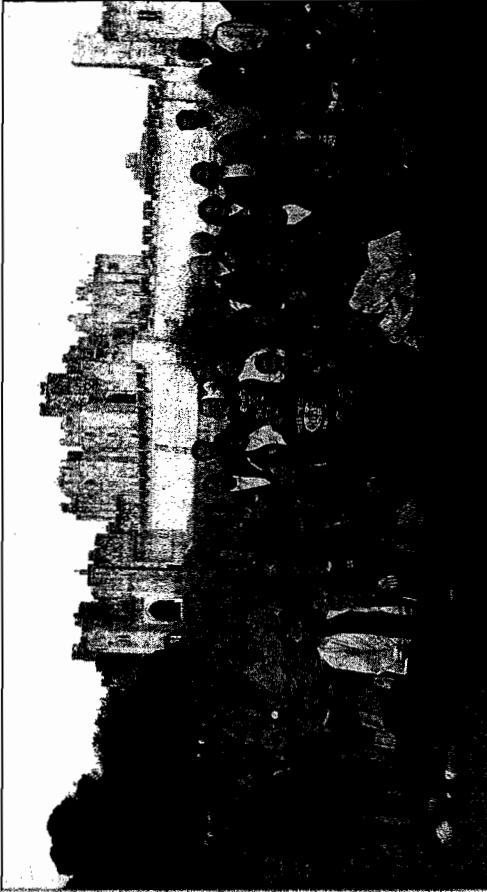
The Magic Begins

We landed at London's Heathrow Airport at 8:00 A.M. on June 1. Most of the trip's participants were arriving by way of Heathrow. We met trip representatives after exiting customs. From there it was a short shuttle ride to the Novotel London Heathrow Hotel, where we would be meeting the other travelers throughout the morning. It was so much fun to get to know everyone. There were more than ninety participants on the trip, and ages ranged from under ten to over sixty. Many were from the United States, but we met people from all over the world, including Australia, Malaysia, and Taiwan. We



The front of Australia House, used as Gringotts Bank in a Harry Potter movie

Beyond Boundaries and Toni Gras



Harry Potter fans in front of Alnwick Castle in Northumberland, England

had whole families, groups of friends, and fans over eighteen traveling solo. We even met the staff of Contra Veritas, an HP website dedicated to Draco and Hermione. No one was alone for long, though, because it was very easy to strike up a conversation. All of us had at least one very important thing in common, our love of Harry Potter.

Around 2:00 P.M. there was a formal welcome meeting, and we were introduced to our guides for the journey. Sean and Marcus would take us through the York and London sites. They were both great sources of information and had us rolling with laughter as they went over the guidelines for the tour. Amy, the storyteller, mesmerized us with tales and riddles.

After the meeting, we were escorted to our coaches, referred to as "The Knight Buses." Prior to boarding, we were each handed a toothbrush and a cup of hot chocolate. Then it was off to our first Harry Potter adventure.

Our first stop was Holdenby House located in Northamptonshire. Built in 1583 by Sir Christopher Hatton to honor Queen Elizabeth I, its estate is home to legendary gardens and the Falconry Centre. We began with a British afternoon tea. From there it was on to our first herbology class, where we received a lesson on the properties and uses of lavender, wormwood, and saponaria. Most exciting was learning about the very famous mandrake plant. We were given real mandrake roots to repot. They were not the exact versions Professor Sprout grows in Greenhouse Three, for that would have been too risky for us Muggles.

Then we headed off to learn about falconry, training hawks to hunt in cooperation with humans. A falconer gave us a demonstration. We watched, fascinated, as a falcon swooped in to snatch meat out of his hand.

After our adventure, we boarded the coaches and headed for York. A buffet dinner was waiting for us when we arrived at our hotel, the Holiday Inn York. It was a great opportunity to continue to mingle. After supper, we had the pleasure of receiving our very own Alivan's wand, designed specially in honor of the trip. I'd venture to say most of us tried to cast a spell or two.

What Does It Feel Like to Be Professor McGonagall?

We spent our third day traveling from York to London. On the way, we stopped at St. Hugh's College in Oxford for a lecture on witchcraft by Professor Robin Briggs, author of *Witches and Neighbors: The Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft*. Professor Briggs amused us by comparing his talk to one Harry might receive in his History of Magic class from Professor Binns. He hoped we would enjoy his more. Needless to say, we all remained open-eyed as he spoke about the history and myths of witchcraft.

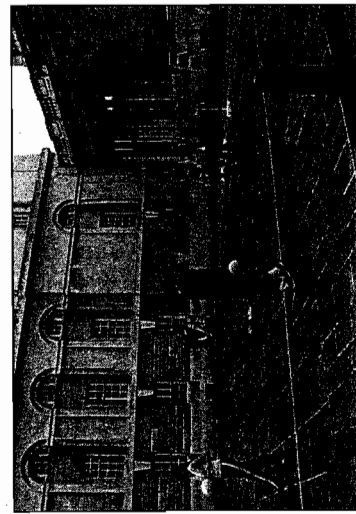
From there we took a walking tour of Oxford. This historic city has been a source of inspiration to many great writers such as C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, and Lewis Carroll. It houses the legendary University of Oxford, which has been teaching students since the thirteenth century. The university encompasses thirty-nine colleges, five museums, and three parks, all sprawled throughout the city. Its rich architecture spans every period from medieval to the present.

The place that everyone wanted to see was Christ Church College. We toured its Great Hall, the inspiration for Hogwarts own Great Hall. The cloisters, built a thousand years ago, are where Harry first sees the plaque engraved with his father's name in the *Philosopher's Stone* movie. Its halls are the same ones seen in the films.

The most anticipated site was the famous sixteenth-century staircase that

leads to the Great Hall. This is where Professor McGonagall greets the first year students. Many took turns tapping their fingers on the marble banister with stern looks on their faces. This is also where Filch catches Harry and Ron sneaking into school in the *Chamber of Secrets* movie and where Tom Riddle stood while speaking to Dumbledore inside the diary memory.

Another famous Harry



A terrestrial Quidditch match played on the grounds of the Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich

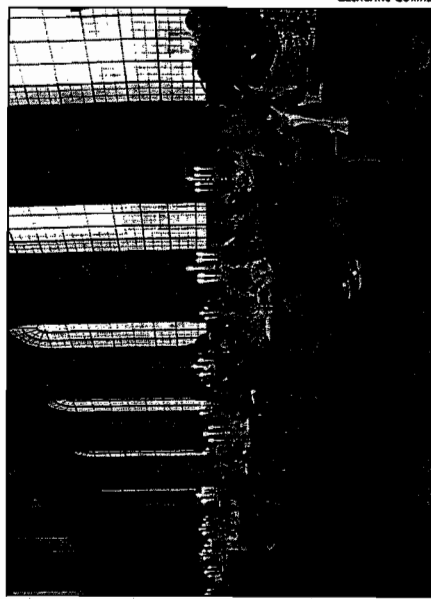
Potter location in Oxford is the Divinity School, which serves as the hospital wing of Hogwarts. We wanted to sneak into the Bodleian Library where Harry snooped around the Restricted Section, but, unlike him, we left our Invisibility Cloaks back home.

From here, it was on to London. We arrived at our hotel, the London Marriott Hotel Regents Park, in the evening. Participants who couldn't wait to explore the city headed out. Eric, Jeff, and I met with Jamie of MuggleNet and Jenna, webmistress of DanRadcliffe.com. We had a great time!

At Last, Prisoner of Azkaban!

This was another fun-filled day packed with activities. We started with the HP Treasure Hunt, a scavenger-type event that would take us throughout the city. We all met in the lobby of our hotel and were divided into eleven teams. Each team was given a bag containing one-day travel passes, maps, an instant disposable camera, marked sealed envelopes, and a clue. The rules of the hunt: We were given a clue that would lead us to a place where we would find one of the tour guides and pick up our next clue. At each location, we had to take a group picture with the camera to prove we had been there. Each group was judged according to how quickly they finished and how creative their pictures and team name were. If we could not figure out a clue, a matching sealed envelope provided the answer, but envelopes returned opened reduced the chance of winning.

The Treasure Hunt was a lot of fun, but not easy. The very talented Galadriel Waters, author of the *Ultimate Unofficial Guide to the Mysteries of Harry Potter*, wrote the clues. Each clue contained hints we had to decipher to determine the exact location. One was to look for a place "down under." Our group thought it was so easy. We figured it had to be a train station. After a frustrating half-hour of searching, we realized we were quite wrong. It turned out that "down under" referred to Australia Bank, whose lobby was the backdrop for Gringotts Bank. We definitely lived up to our team name, The Aloho-Morons, lovingly given to us by Eric. (For those of you who are



A Hogwarts-style feast in the Painted Hall at the Old Royal Naval College

wondering, The Aloho-Morons did not win the Treasure Hunt. In fact, we never came close!)

Each clue led to somewhere in London where filming for the Harry Potter movies took place. We saw Leadenhall Market where Hagrid walks with Harry on the way to Diagon Alley. There is even a shop there called Oliviers. Some of us could have sworn for a brief moment the sign actually read Ollivanders. We stood in front of the Glass House, the entrance to The Leaky Cauldron in the first film. Other exciting places included St. Pancras Station, a famous spot for seeing a flying Ford Anglia. At Octopus House is



Wipeout! Eric of Mugglenet.com fails to pass through the barrier at Platform Nine and Three-Quarters.

another entrance to The Leaky Cauldron, seen in the third film. Along the way, we even had a chance to visit the famous Tower of London.

King's Cross was the fans' favorite. It actually has a sign marking the entrance to Platform Nine and Three-Quarters. Naturally, visiting here would not be complete without a trolley crash re-enactment. Yes, we had quite a crowd laughing at us as Eric sprawled on the floor grasping for his wand. The only thing missing was an owl in a cage. It was also quite touching to stand on the bridge where Hagrid gives Harry his train ticket.

We had to be finished in time to be at the Odeon Leicester Square cinema by 4:00 P.M. We were finally going to see the movie we had been waiting for—*Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*. The Odeon hosted the London premiere of the movie. Premium seats were reserved for the group.

After the viewing, we walked to the Radisson Edwardian Hampshire Hotel to discuss the movie. We were in awe as we stepped off the elevator to enter the meeting place. The penthouse suite's view was breathtaking. The general consensus on the movie—it's a hit! We also had the pleasure of meeting new fans who had arrived that morning for the weekend tour. Afterwards, some people headed back to the hotel while others stayed in central London to do some more sightseeing.

Quidditch, Wizard Games, and the Final Feast

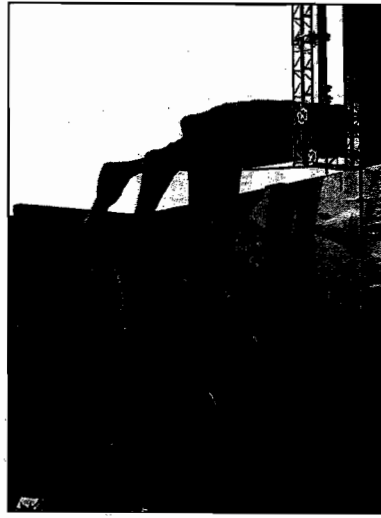
This was our last day of the trip. We were both sad and excited at the same time. We knew that a special Harry-themed day was planned. We headed out to the Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich, six miles southeast of London. Located adjacent to the River Thames, it is one of the country's most famous riverside landmarks. Construction began in the fifteenth century and extensive remodeling has taken place throughout the years. The college originally functioned as a seaman's hospital and then was utilized as a training center for naval officers until 1998. It is currently used as a location for film and television productions and is open to the public for tours. Part of the college was reserved for our use.

Activities were available throughout the day, and we had the option of choosing which to attend. Although Hermione had difficulty with it, many of us tried our hand at "Divination." Our "Professor" covered the topics of palmistry (palm-reading) and tassecomancy (tea-leaf reading). We had a guidebook to aid us. However, even with that, some of us were unable to broaden our minds and decipher the true meaning of the soggy tea leaves at the bottom of our cups.

There was a fan-fiction workshop and a storytelling session. We had skittle bowling, which is English ninepins played with a wooden disk or ball. Our ninepins represented Death Eaters, which had to be put out of commission.

Outdoor activities included riding a mechanical dragon, playing wizard's chess, and searching a pond for "magical creatures." There was even a gyroscope ride, which did a wonderful job of simulating a ride on an out-of-control broom.

Most popular by far was playing Muggle Quidditch. USA Team Handball, the National Governing Body for the Olympic Sport of Handball in the U.S., designed the game. They did an excellent job. Their representation was the closest we could get to playing Quidditch without flying on a broom. Games were held throughout the day, culminating with a final tournament. There were slight differences from the game Harry is used to playing. Our teams had nine players instead of seven. The additional two were designated Bludger Masters



A Dementor's hand grasps the edge of the London theater showing the newly released *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* film.

character and our trip into his world had expanded our own world in incredible ways, ones we could have never imagined.

About Catherine Collins: "My passion for Harry Potter began with the first movie. Never in my wildest dreams could I imagine where that would lead. It was short leap to reading the books, then working at online fan sites—TheQuidditchPitch.net (formerly TheDarkLord.net), HarryPotterFanZone.com, and MuggleNet.com. I've had the wonderful opportunity to interview the cast and crew of *The Prisoner of Azkaban* movie, and provide media coverage for the first ever HP Fan Trip and Spellbound! 2005. The best part is the wonderful friendships I have made. In the non-HP world, I am a registered nurse, devoted Trekkie, and Mom to two beautiful cats, Siri and Jadzia."

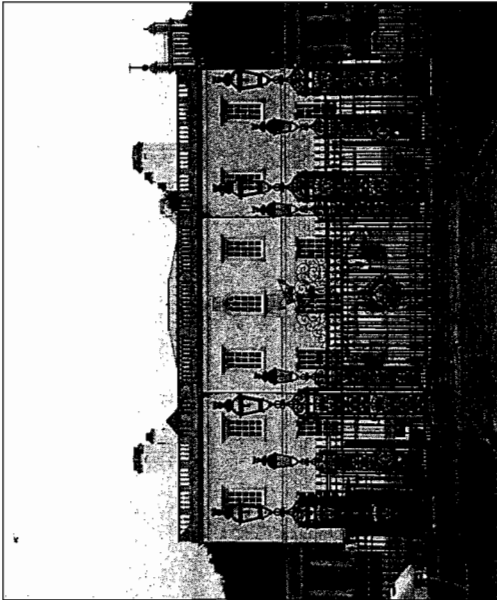


whose job was to throw the Bludgers at the opposing team because obviously nobody knew the spell to enchant the Bludgers themselves! Chasers would throw the Quaffle to each other and the one closest to the hoops would attempt to score. The Keeper tried to block all shots. Beaters protected their teammates from stray Bludgers thrown by the Bludger Masters. No one knew when the Snitch would be released. Each team's Seeker would be poised and ready to dive for it. After countless games, the Fiery Phoenixes team emerged as our Quidditch champions.

After our fun-filled day, we had the Final Feast celebration. This was held in the stunning Painted Hall, recognized as probably the finest dining hall in the Western World. The walls and ceiling are decorated with James Thornhill's epic paintings. Commissioned from 1707-1726, they show *Peace* and *Liberty* triumphing over *Tyranny*, and depict Britain's role as a maritime power.

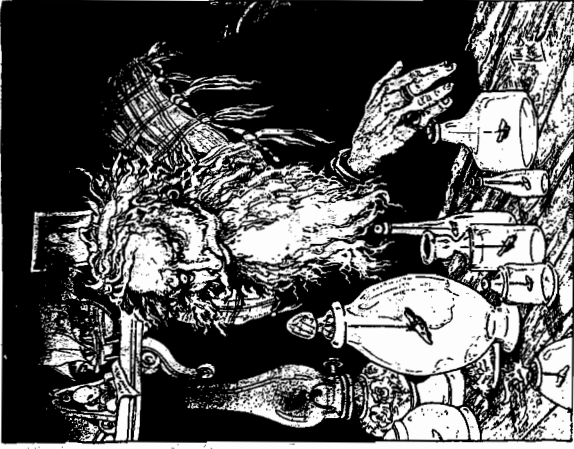
The Hall was set up to resemble Hogwarts' Great Hall; there was even a Head Table. We were served a traditional British feast. Many of the different foods we have read about in the Harry Potter books were included, and a few of us chose to dress for the occasion in wizard attire. Student uniforms were the most popular, but a few adults preferred to dress as professors. We all enjoyed Eric's video footage of the trip, which he projected onto a seven-foot screen. Prizes were given out to our Quidditch, Wizard Games, and Treasure Hunt winners. As a memento, each participant was given a beautiful limited edition, artist-signed glass pumpkin. Gini Garcia designed these special keepsakes in honor of our trip. We spent the rest of the evening reminiscing about the wonderful week. Finally, it was time to say good night. There were many long goodbyes and promises to keep in touch. Some of the participants stayed on for the Scottish Extension tour that would take them to more Harry Potter locations.

Early the next morning Eric and I said goodbye to Jeff and headed for Heathrow. As our plane took flight, we turned to each other and grinned in amazement at the adventure we had just experienced. Our love of a literary



A building on the premises of the Old Royal Naval College

Catherine Collins



Notable and Quotable: Film Quips

Films live and die on their casting.

—Director Peter Jackson, who helmed the Tolkien film trilogy
(from the appendices of the extended DVD of *The Two Towers*)

Acting is an interpretive art in which the best actors not only step into the roles and become the characters they portray, but also bring something of themselves to help bring the character to life.

The casting is key, as director Peter Jackson affirms: Pick the right person for the right role and the film will come alive.

All of the Potter films to date have benefited from superb casting choices.

To promote the films, the actors have collectively given hundreds of interviews, from which I've drawn the quotes that appear here, with my comments on the casting.

Sean Biggerstaff as Oliver Wood. The Quidditch team captain, Wood, an upper-classman, is confident and exudes a take-charge air as befitting his position. Sean Biggerstaff is a natural, giving a novice Harry Potter the benefit of his experience in Quidditch. A good performance with just the right touch of humor.

John Cleese as Nearly Headless Nick. Funnyman Cleese is perhaps best known for his work as part of the comedy troupe Monty Python, so it's no surprise that Cleese plays with brio the part of one of the ghosts that delightfully haunts Hogwarts. A haughty ghost whose head literally hangs by a thread, Cleese plays the role with the right touch of nobility, as befitting the ghost's lineage—Sir Nicholas de Mimsy Porpington.

Robbie Coltrane as groundskeeper and keykeeper Rubeus Hagrid. Standing eight feet, six inches tall in the novels (according to Rowling), Hagrid is a giant among men, physically and literally. In the film Coltrane must portray the gentle giant who can simultaneously show his strength and his compassion—two sides of a man of seeming contradictions. Coltrane brings a precision to this critical role, one that Rowling reportedly considered to be a crucial one in terms of casting. Larger than life, Coltrane plays the role of Hagrid to the hilt and convinces us that he's just an overgrown kid who dotes on Albus Dumbledore, whom he looks upon as a father figure.

Coltrane on his role: "I've seen the movie and, believe me, it looks fantastic and is so true and honest to the book." (Quoted by Louis B. Hobson in "Magic Monsters Set Loose" in the *Calgary Sun*, November 5, 2001.)

Christian Coulson as student Tom Riddle (Lord Voldemort). Coulson portrays the diabolical Lord Voldemort, whose given name was abandoned because of his Muggle heritage on his father's side. Coulson appears at the end of book two, when he announces that he is the true heir of Salazar Slytherin—not Harry Potter, which most students mistakenly believed.

Coulson provides a solid performance as an angry young man who has patiently bided his time to bedevil the wizarding world.

Coulson on his new fame: "It hasn't really changed me. People don't recognise me. Not long ago I walked past a group of people who had just seen the film, and were talking about Tom Riddle. They clocked me but had no idea who I was. That was kind of nice in a way. I can't imagine what life would be like if you couldn't take a bus or ride on the tube." (Quoted from a press conference for the first film in London prior to its release, from BBCi Films: Interviews on www.bbc.co.uk, undated.)

Warwick Davis as Professor Filius Flitwick and a goblin bank teller. Although the roles are quite different—a charming, diminutive professor who teaches charms at Hogwarts, and a goblin of serious mien at Gringotts, the wizard bank—Davis plays both well. A solid, creditable performance by an underappreciated actor, Davis's sympathetic portrayal of Professor Flitwick is delightful to see.

Davis on his role: "We were filming the Great Hall scene. I looked to my left, and I saw Maggie Smith, Alan Rickman, and Richard Harris; and then, on my right, I saw Robbie Coltrane. I thought to myself, 'It doesn't get any

Biggerstaff got his first break when veteran actor Alan Rickman saw him in a production of *Macbeth* and recommended him to the casting director of the Harry Potter films.

Biggerstaff on his film character: "He's very sporty, slightly eccentric, and very passionate about Quidditch. Wanting to win the Quidditch House Cup is like the Holy Grail for him." (Quoted in *16 Magazine*, November 2001.)

David Bradley as Argus Filch. The caretaker of Hogwarts, Filch is a rather nasty man. He longs for the good old days when he could mete out positively medieval discipline—hanging students by their thumbs in the dungeon (or so he says). Less concerned with the student body, he seems more concerned about the welfare of his cat, Mrs. Norris. When someone puts a petrifying spell on her, it pushes him over the edge emotionally. He angrily names Harry Potter as the culprit and demands immediate justice. Ever so patiently, Dumbledore explains that the petrification is only temporary; Madam Pomfrey, the school nurse, will be able to administer the potion necessary to restore Mrs. Norris to her former state.

Bradley is a delightfully cantankerous caretaker, who brings his obnoxious characteristics to life.

Bradley on book five: "I heard that writer J. K. Rowling had killed off one of the characters in her last book and that she had cried afterwards, and I thought, 'Well, it can't be Filch—no one would cry over him.'" (Quoted by Marion McMullen in "Potter Villain Is Out for Blood," online at: <http://iccoventry.co.uk>, September 12, 2003.)

Kenneth Branagh portraying Professor Gilderoy Lockhart. Although Lockhart only briefly appears in book five, he steals the show in book two, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*.

The first choice was Hugh Grant, who no doubt would have given a fine performance, but Branagh is now indelibly imprinted in our collective minds' eye, with his over-the-top performance. Flamboyantly dressed—he's quite the natty dresser—and full of himself, Branagh hams it up and hogs the limelight. Branagh plays the role to the hilt and lends a much-needed humorous touch to an increasingly dark series of books.

Branagh on his film character: "Gilderoy Lockhart is a fantastically successful wizard and writer of many famous books which are now being used as textbooks at Hogwarts School. He is very much admired by the female students, which is very irritating to the boys. He is a narcissist, a gadfly, very full of himself, and faintly idiotic. But he can be rather touching at times. He amuses and intrigues us. Is he or isn't he a good guy? He is certainly a strange peacock of a man. (From "Interview with Kenneth Branagh" at countingdown.com, September 15, 2002.)

At movies.about.com, Ralph Fiennes tells Rebecca Murray that "I don't have a fan's investment in the books myself. I like the books. I admire the world of the books and the characters that she's created, but I'm not, as it were, an addict of 'Harry Potter.'"

On playing (again) an evil character, Fiennes told Murray, "Well, that was one of the blessings of a part like this where you're meant to be playing the distillation of evil, whatever that is, which can be anything. I think the one thing we were aiming for was a sort of question, a certain amount of unpredictability in him, so no one quite knows what he's going to do or say next, which I hope makes him slightly sort of dangerous."

Michael Gambon as Albus Dumbledore. The late Richard Harris had committed to the film series but passed on before the third began principal photography.

Gambon on his new, challenging role: "My friends' children come round and see me now, which they never did before. I'm getting letters from all over the world and kids knock on my front door, which is a bit of a nuisance, but you have to keep smiling and be nice. Being Dumbledore is a big responsibility." (Quoted by John Hiscock in "Dumbledore Makes Gambon Kids' Favourite" from News.Scotsman.com, as cited in *Showbiz Digest*, September 29, 2003.)

Brendan Gleeson as Professor Alastor "Mad-Eye" Moody. If there's one new character who steals the show, it's "Mad-Eye" Moody portrayed by Brendan Gleeson. In the film, actor Rupert Grint, as Ron Weasley, says, "Brilliant, isn't he? Completely demented, of course. Terrifying to be in the same room with him."

That's a pretty accurate assessment. In a brief film clip from www.ropesofsilicon.com, Gleeson, on set and taking a break from the filming, explains his character's battered and world-weary physical appearance: "He's literally been through the wars and he's shaken."

Larger than life, forceful, and every bit a figure who has suffered numerous scars, both physical and psychic, Gleeson brings a manic intensity to the role, which is appropriate, considering the character's past: A legendary Auror, Moody lives up to his namesake, and then some. Fortunately, he's on the good side. . . .

Richard Griffiths as Vernon Dursley, Harry Potter's uncle. Griffiths is convincing in this role. The books portray Vernon as an unimaginative man who has never liked, and will never accept, Harry Potter in his life. Though he begrudgingly accepts Harry into his home, it's clear in book one that Uncle Vernon wants to keep Harry in his place. Harry's place, of course, is in the cupboard under the stairs, which is symbolic of Vernon's feelings: the cupboard is where you store things to keep them out of sight.

better than this.'" (Quoted from "Exclusive Interview with Professor Flitwick" on the website entertainment-rewired.com, November 15, 2001.)

Tom Felton as Draco Malfoy. The arch nemesis of Harry Potter, Draco Malfoy is not only a rich snob of the worst sort, but also prejudiced to the extreme. Proud of his heritage as a pureblood, Malfoy is a supercilious boy whose chief goal in life is to act as a foil to Harry Potter. After Harry becomes the Seeker for Gryffindor, it is no great surprise when Draco becomes the Seeker for Slytherin, so the two are pitted once again, not on the ground but in aerial combat.

Felton, as a actor, has a difficult challenge in portraying Malfoy because the character is essentially "flat." That is to say, the character is one-dimensional fictionally. He is always the bad egg, the one who insults Harry at every opportunity and sneers at Hermione Granger and anyone else he considers inferior. (It's worth noting that it is Granger, not Malfoy, who shines academically.)

Felton plays the role with a delicious evilness, a biting sneer, and a look of unrivaled contempt on his face at Pottery and the Weasel, his nicknames for Harry Potter and Ron Weasley.

More a caricature than a fully developed character, Malfoy serves his purpose all too well, but one would wish for a more rounded character, so we could see Felton stretch himself as an actor in a role that, despite its one-note tone, is a fan favorite.

Felton on his role: "Inevitably, people have the impression that I'm as mean and nasty as Malfoy. The worst is the reaction of little kids. When five- or six-year-old fans see me, they often start to cry. They're terrified because they think I'm really Malfoy. They don't make the distinction between the actor and the character. One time, Chris Columbus's kids ran away when they saw me! [laughs] These reactions make me a little angry, but at least it proves I was convincing in my role. That's gratifying enough." (Quoted from an interview posted on an HP fan website, original source: *One Magazine*, November 2003.)

Ralph Fiennes as Lord Voldemort. Who can forget Fiennes's riveting role as Nazi concentration camp commandant Amoth Goeth in *Shindler's List*? Fiennes's interpretation of the clinically detached Goeth likely went a long way toward convincing the casting director for *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* that he was the right actor to play the demanding, and pivotal, role of Lord Voldemort, who is at the dark heart of the Harry Potter novels.

Fiennes and his Death Eaters are among the scariest of all creations in fiction—scary enough to spook the King of Horror, Stephen King, who admitted as much to Rowling in the presence of 6,000 fans at Radio City Music Hall during a combined reading with John Irving—and Fiennes's performance in this film does not disappoint. He is truly awful, in the best sense of that word.

Harris fits his role like a hand in a racing glove. It's hard to imagine anyone filling his considerable shoes, but Michael Gambon is likely up to the challenge. Even still, everyone will fondly remember Harris as Dumbledore from the first two Potter films as the wise wizard and father figure for Harry Potter, a role he brought to life.

Harris on the child actors in the film series: "They're very good, actually. They were terrific. What amazed me about them was that they were so confident. They weren't intimidated by anything, like Maggie Smith or myself, or Robbie Coltrane, or anybody. I was kind of enamoured by it." (Quoted in a profile by Claire Bickley in the *Toronto Sun*, November 13, 2001.)

Harris's commitment to the film series: "That huge commitment caused him to turn the role down at first, but the production had a secret agent close to him to change his mind. The books were the favourites of Harris' then 11-year-old granddaughter Ella.

"She called me up and she said to me, 'If you don't do it, I'll never speak to you again.' So I said, 'Okay, I'll do it'.

"Ella spent two days on the film's set and has a background role as a student in a Hogwarts dining hall scene." (Profile by Claire Bickley in the *Toronto Sun*, November 13, 2001.)

Ian Hart as Professor Quirrell. People are sometimes not w-w-w-what they s-s-s-seem. Case in point: The stuttering Professor Quirrell, the new Defense against the Dark Arts teacher in the first year Harry Potter attends Hogwarts. Quirrell first meets Harry at the Leaky Cauldron, where the young boy wizard is surprised that everyone there not only knows his name but respects him—a hitherto unknown experience, since he's used to being ignored or mistreated. Hart delivers a noteworthy performance as a disarming admirer of Harry Potter and one who, when faced with the prospect of a troll on the loose in Hogwarts, faints in fear.

At the end of the first film, he shows himself as he actually is: Far from being a stuttering, squeamish professor, he's actually someone far more powerful, allied to the dark side.

Hart on his audition: "Even before my audition, there were several pages missing from my script because those bits were so unbelievably secret not even I was allowed to see them. I'm not usually attracted to big-budget American films. . . . I only decided to do this one because it's a different kind of role. There are a lot of special effects in the film so, from a technical point of view, it was a challenge." (From "Wild at Heart" in *Nova* magazine, June 2001.)

Shirley Henderson as Moaning Myrtle (a student-turned-ghost). Although ghosts haunt Hogwarts, most roam throughout the entire building—all except one: Moaning Myrtle, who hangs out in the girl's bathroom, where she died under suspicious circumstances. Myrtle's nickname is apt, since she

Griffiths portrays the blustery Vernon Dursley to perfection. We, as viewers, are absolutely convinced this is Vernon Dursley, the uncle from Hell.

Griffiths on the books: "The stories are becoming more dark and I think that's what makes them more attractive. Because the people that saw the first movie were 13- and 14-year-olds, they're growing along with the story. So it's natural of movies to also grow, and become more complex and mature. Of course there will always be new children of ten years, to see the first movie and repeat the cycle. They wouldn't be able to use the same people and repeat the stories changing just a little. It wouldn't be fun." (Quoted on a HP fan website, zanzaro.com, from Omelete.com during a launch party for the second film, undated.)

Rupert Grint as Ron Weasley. Among the cast of characters, three are critical: Harry Potter, Ron Weasley, and Hermione Granger. Of the three, only Rupert Grint has no prior film experience, which makes his standout status all the more remarkable. In the books, Ron is Harry's best friend. The youngest boy in a wizard family long on love but short on money, Ron gets the family hand-me-downs and is used to a life of genteel poverty. Actor Rupert Grint plays Ron Weasley to perfection. By turns self-effacing, incredulous, fearful, or angry as the occasion requires, Grint's nuanced performance brings Ron Weasley from page to film screen with astonishing fidelity. Unaffected, unabashedly normal in every way, with the right touch of regret at having been born in a poor wizarding family, Grint as Weasley is picture-perfect. He is my favorite among all the child actors in the Potter films. In short, bloody brilliant!

Grint on his role: "It all started when I was watching this English children's television programme called *Newsround*. The show told you how to audition for a part in Harry Potter and so I sent in a letter because I really wanted to play the part of Ron. But, for weeks I heard nothing. So, I was looking on the *Newsround* website one day and saw how another kid had sent a video of himself. So, my mum helped me to make an audition tape with me doing a rap of how much I wanted to be in the film, reading some lines as Ron which I wrote myself and also dressing up as my drama teacher. That was the most embarrassing part as she's a woman! I sent it in and the next thing I knew I was being called by the casting director. And then I was doing screen tests! And then I got the part!" (From a fan website, rupertgrint.net, undated.)

Richard Harris as Albus Dumbledore. The late Richard Harris defined the character on screen. The book takes great pains to establish the character as one of worldly wisdom and restraint. We know, for instance, that he's held in wide regard among the wizarding community and considered the only one who could face, and best, Lord Voldemort in a wizards' duel. (Who, one wonders, would be Dumbledore's second? I'd vote for Alastor Moody.)

make him look bad. But he falls in love with Hermione, so he must have a soft side. . . ."

Jason Isaacs as Lucius Malfoy. A confident wizard with supercilious manners, Lucius is the father of Draco Malfoy—not surprisingly, like father, like son. The father is contemptuous of any witch or wizard not born in a wizarding family; purebloods like himself, he believes, are the only ones worthy of being taught magic. Non-magic witches and wizards shouldn't even be allowed to enroll at Hogwarts—"mudbloods," he derisively calls them.

Jason Isaacs is memorable as Lucius Malfoy. Fearsome when angry, placating when necessary, politically suave as the situation dictates, he exhibits a range of emotion that we don't see in his son, Draco, who walks around Hogwarts with a perpetual sneer and an insulting manner whenever he sees Harry Potter or his friends.

Knowing what will happen in book five, all one can say about Jason Isaacs is that we expect a great performance from him, and he will surely deliver.

Isaacs on his role: "I probably shouldn't mention this in public, but [Rowling] has actually sent me an early draft of the next book, which is called *Harry Potter and the Chronicles of Lucius*, which is all about Lucius's early romantic adventures. She's warned me it might change before publication, so I'll wait and see." (Quoted by Alec Cawthorne in "Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets" from BBCi Films Interviews, November 2002.)

Toby Jones as the voice of Dobby the house-elf. A wonderfully realized character, Dobby appears on the scene as a hand-wringing, deeply concerned elf who will stop at nothing to prevent Harry Potter from returning to school for his second year—an attempt that is doomed to failure, but not before Dobby uses all the powers at his command to dissuade, then physically bar, Harry, even at the risk of injury.

Though CGI technology can create a computerized person, it cannot create that person's voice. In this regard, Toby Jones's voice blends seamlessly with Dobby, a downtrodden house-elf who is overly emotional when Harry Potter simply recognizes his existence and is minimally polite—a stark contrast to Dobby's usual condition of servitude, in which he's used, abused, and misused by the Malfoy family.

Toby Jones's voice ranges from contrite to adamant as the occasion dictates. I'm looking forward to seeing more of Dobby and hearing more of Jones.

Matthew Lewis as Neville Longbottom. Pertually put-upon, Longbottom, in the second movie, laments, "Why is it always me?" Unsure of himself and bedeviled by Slytherins, especially their head, Professor Snape, Longbottom's role is more than aptly filled by Matthew Lewis, who plays the part so convincingly that one wonders if the young actor had similar experiences in school. I suspect, though, that he's simply a good actor, and one whose role

bemoans her fate and laments her early, and unforeseen, passage into the spirit world. (She is, in fact, the only student-turned-ghost.)

Actress Shirley Henderson steps perfectly into the role of Moaning Myrtle, with the right tone of indignation and sorrow, balanced by righteous anger at her lamentable circumstances. She didn't choose death—it chose her.

Sweet on Harry but harsh on Ron, Moaning Myrtle, stuck in limbo, has made her troubled peace with her life as a ghost.

Henderson (aged 37) on her role: "I loved Harry Potter, but I thought it was crazy me getting a part in it. I didn't think I'd get it because she's a schoolgirl. It was great fun: When you're a ghost, you're flying through the air in a harness and it's quite physical. I'd never done any special effects before." (Quoted from the newspaper website scotsman.com, August 19, 2003.)

Joshua Herdman as Gregory Goyle. A crony of Draco Malfoy, Goyle is an appendage of Draco.

John Hurt as Mr. Ollivander. The proprietor of Ollivander's Wand Shop, which is a store frozen in time, has a remarkable memory. Remembering every wand he's ever sold, he tells Harry Potter that he distinctly remembers selling wands to his parents, and wondered when the son would show up to get his wand.

Hurt plays the part as if he's been in the business of selling wands for a long time. Picking among the many boxes of wands in his store, he finally finds the *only* wand for Harry—a wand he was destined to own.

Though only on the screen briefly, Hurt more than fits the bill: He is tailor-made as a storekeeper in Diagon Alley.

Hurt on acting: "Well, yes, pretending to be other people is my game and that to me is the essence of the whole business of acting." (Quoted by Geoff Andrew in the *Guardian*, April 27, 2000.)

Stanislav Ianevski as the Bulgarian Seeker, Viktor Krum, a final year student from Durmstrang Institute. In his screen debut, Ianevski perfectly fits the role of Viktor Krum, who makes a dramatic appearance in *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. In the lead position, he flies into the stadium hosting the Quidditch World Cup competition, flanked by his fellow Quidditch teammates. Ianevski does a dramatic front-to-back flip on his broom as he soars around the stadium, to the delight and amazement of all, especially an awestruck Ronald Weasley who breathlessly proclaims, "There's no one like Krum. He's like a bird the way he rides the wind. He's more than an athlete—he's an artist!"

From *Sugar Magazine*, Ianevski on Krum: "He's a mixture of good and bad. I think he's more of a good guy, but some spells are cast on him to

Robert Pattinson as Cedric Diggory. The Hogwarts champion who will compete in the Triwizard tournament, Diggory is described by Rowling as "an absurdly handsome 17-year-old," which is tough to live up to. Pattinson, however, effortlessly fits the description. He comes across in the film just as Rowling portrayed him: a confident, older student in Hufflepuff who is well regarded among his peers and proves his mettle in the Triwizard tournament, as well. On his role, Pattinson told the BBC that "I think he's a pretty cool character. He's not really a complete cliché of the good kid in school. He's just quiet. He is actually just a genuinely good person, but he doesn't make a big deal about it or anything. He's just like, whatever. I can kind of relate to that. He's not an unattractive character at all and his storyline is a nice [one] to play."

James and Oliver Phelps as Fred and George Weasley. Twin brothers (obviously), they are perfectly cast as the Weasley twins, magical pranksters whose career goals are nontraditional. They want to make a living as full-time inventors and vendors of magical novelties.

Think of what a discussion around the Weasley dinner table must be like around O.W.L. time—Molly stressing the need to do well on the exams, Arthur automatically endorsing his wife's view, and Fred and George exchanging knowing glances, since they have no intention of following in their father's footsteps by joining the rank-and-file at the Ministry of Magic.

James and Oliver Phelps are a pure delight and, knowing what comes in book five, I'm very much looking forward to seeing them in that film, from the first practical joke on poor Dudley Dursley to their grand joke on Professor/High Inquisitor/Headmaster Dolores Umbridge.

On their roles. James: "It was a once in a lifetime experience, to see how it's created." Oliver: "Working alongside such big name actors was fantastic; it hasn't really sunk in yet." (From an interview on www.oliver-phelps.com, undated.)

Clémence Poésy as Fleur Delacour. Best known for her roles in several French movies, Poésy plays the impossibly beautiful and unobtainable Fleur Delacour, the kind of beautiful and irresistible girl at whom men throw themselves . . . in vain. In *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, Poésy comes across as beautiful and distant, but in the end proves to be warm and accessible.

On her role, Poésy told *Empire Online*: "She's a bit cold. She's the kind of girl I used to hate when I was in high school! She always has tons of people behind her, doing everything perfectly, which is impossible. I talked about it with Mike [the film's director] and said, 'Do you want it to be snobby?' and he was like, 'Oh, you know . . . ' and I said, 'She's French, right?' and he said, 'Yeah, exactly!' Mike has got a great sense of humour and that's what's in the book; she's a bit of an image people might have about French girls!"

in the upcoming films will become increasingly visible and more important as he assumes his rightful place in the wizarding world.

Lewis on the scene in which Hermione Granger temporarily immobilizes him with a petrification spell: "I kept doing it and doing it—I even practised at home with my brother—but eventually they had to get a stunt man in because my legs kept flying up at the ends." (Quoted by Clare Youell in "Potter Boys Reveal COS Acting Secrets" from BBC Newsround, November 15, 2002.)

Miriam Margolyes as Professor Sprout. The professor of Herbology, Sprout is jovial and down to earth. Margolyes fittingly plays the part and makes us wish she had been given a bigger supporting role in the book and, therefore, the films. A delightful visual interpretation, Margolyes has certainly got at the root of the character.

Margolyes on her role: "It's a very friendly set. Chris Columbus, the director, has a sweet personality—he only looks about 12, actually. And the kids are delightful: they like each other very much. . . . I enjoyed myself a lot. . . . I was delighted with it. I was terribly good, and I think the film is terribly good." (From "Harry Potter Exclusive: Interview with Professor Sprout," a RealAudio interview conducted by Dominic King from www.bbc.co.uk, Radio Kent film, January 16, 2000.)

Harry Melling as Dudley Dursley. In real life Harry Melling is undoubtedly a prince of a fellow, a fine young lad, which is a stark contrast to the character he plays—a bullying git named Dudley Dursley, who enjoys bedeviling Harry Potter and making his life as miserable as possible. Dudley is a whining, obnoxious, self-centered brat of a boy, which Melling portrays to perfection. Given a choice of roles, Melling might prefer a more winsome role, but somebody's got to play the bad guy, and in this case Melling is very good as the very bad Dudley.

On his role: "It was fun playing the baddie, though—more challenging." (Quoted on an online site, www.thisheartfordshire.co.uk, September 18, 2001.)

Gary Oldman as Sirius Black. I am twitching, I tell you, twitching with anticipation to see Oldman as Sirius Black. Though we only have a brief teaser to give us a taste of what is to come in June 2004, the snippets of footage with Oldman are delightful. I especially love the "WANTED" poster with Oldman laughing maniacally—the perfect touch—and the shot of him in Azkaban, as he turns his gaze toward the viewer.

In the third Potter film, Sirius Black is on center stage and in the spotlight, and I'm telling you now, even without the benefit of Professor Trelawney's crystal ball, I feel confident in saying that Oldman is going to steal the show. Something wicked—though not in an evil sense: think British slang—this way comes!

Daniel Radcliffe as Harry Potter. All the king's horses and all the king's men couldn't put this film franchise together again if the casting for Harry Potter weren't dead-on. A casting challenge on the scale of Everest, Harry Potter is so well defined in one's imagination, due in large part to the visual interpretations by Mary GrandPré, that it seemed nearly impossible to find a child actor who could fit the bill.

In fact, even after interviewing thousands of young boys, with principal shooting scheduled to begin in a few weeks, the key role remain unfulfilled, a casting director's nightmare.

By luck, Daniel Radcliffe showed up on the radar, though not in a way anyone had envisioned. He was sitting in the audience at a movie theater and provisionally spotted.

Radcliffe is superb as Harry Potter. Perfectly cast, Radcliffe—no matter what else he does in the film community—will be forever remembered for his role as Harry Potter.

To watch Harry Potter in the books grow up is a reader's delight; and to watch Radcliffe's interpretation of the character in the film versions is a corresponding delight.

Daniel Radcliffe is an extraordinarily talented young actor who has carried the awesome (a word I use sparingly) responsibility of carrying the film series to date. These are films that gross nearly a billion dollars each!

If, as Rowling writes, the wand chooses the wizard, then it's not too far fetched—especially under the circumstances under which the actor was discovered—to assume that the film picks the actor. In this case, it was an inspired choice and a wonderful performance by an indisputably gifted young man.

Rowling may have given us Harry Potter, but Radcliffe has *shown* us Harry, and done so brilliantly.

Radcliffe on Emma and Rupert: "We get along really well because we're all quite like our characters and Rupert's very funny, Emma's very intelligent, and I'm in between because that's how Harry is, I think." (Quoted from "Daniel Radcliffe: Full Interview," conducted by Lizo Mzimba, from BBC Newsround on: <http://News.bbc.co.uk>, October 24, 2002.)

Chris Rankin as Percy Weasley. The character of Percy Weasley is a good example of how Rowling has very carefully thought out how fictional characters should grow. The straight-laced, by-the-book Percy Weasley is professionally interpreted by Chris Rankin, who delivers a solid performance. Walking a thin line between being fussy and too stiff, Rankin has the right touch. For instance, in a scene from the first film, Percy encounters Draco Malfoy, who spies what he thinks are his cronies Crabbe and Goyle, who are in fact not. Percy walks up and puts Malfoy in his right place—a small but memorable moment.

A young man whose life is defined by rules, Percy is wonderfully brought to life by Chris Rankin.

Rankin on his role: "I feel very happy that people appreciate the work I do and who I am. I still think that I'm the same guy I was before Potter came along. I'm no celebrity, and I don't want to be. I like doing the work I do, it's just a job at the end of the day, and if people get enjoyment out of it—I've done the job well. Percy's a great character, so I'm not surprised there's websites about him!" (Quoted from "My Interview with Chris Rankin" by an uncredited staffer of a fan website, www.percyweasley.com, January 25, 2003.)

Miranda Richardson as tabloid reporter Rita Skeeter. As fans know, J. K. Rowling has had her fill (and then some) with adult reporters, who long ago began intruding in her life—banging on her door to demand interviews and ambushing her in public—to the point where she has had to literally take refuge behind the towering nine-foot wall that surrounds her Edinburgh home, protected by electronic security.

Rita Skeeter is, to Harry Potter, an annoying character buzzing around him in *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, always seeking a new angle that she can write about with a touch of exaggeration.

Dressed in a tight-fitting green outfit, sporting curly platinum blonde hair and ruby red lipstick, Richardson is without question a scene stealer, using a Quick Quotes Quill to dictate her imaginative stories.

On her role, she told www.timesonline.co.uk, "It's sort of irresistible to be part of this great leviathan that is Harry Potter. The sense is it's part of history, and for that reason it's great. As it would have been to be part of *The Lord of the Rings*. And I like the fact that kids everywhere are clutching a hardback book to their chests and huddling off into corners, getting absorbed in a new world."

In 2003, Richardson had a small "preview" of Hogwarts, spoofing Hermione Granger in a skit for Comic Relief. Her one regret is that one of her lines was dropped. In one scene, in which she's wearing a small replica of a key piece of Quidditch gear, she asks innocently, "Are you looking at my Snitch?"

According to Steve Vander Ark's website, the Harry Potter Lexicon, the Snitch is "a walnut-sized golden ball with silver wings, the most important of the four balls used in Quidditch. A Snitch is bewitched to avoid capture for as long as possible within the boundaries of the pitch. The capture of the Snitch ends the game and gives the team whose Seeker caught it 150 points, which usually determines which team wins the game."

Alan Rickman as Professor Severus Snape. Rickman is best known for his film roles as a bad guy—the Sheriff of Nottingham in *Robin Hood* and the terrorist mastermind in *Die Hard*, to name two that come immediately to mind.

The role is demanding—in fact, crucial, according to Rowling, who was concerned about its casting—but Maggie Smith is more than capable of filling the role. One of England's most celebrated actresses, Dame Maggie Smith is a consummate professional, a pro's pro. She delivers a carefully nuanced role, which she seems to fill without exertion.

In one film scene, she confronts Harry and Ron, who have just barely escaped a direct attack by the aptly named Whomping Willow. A miserable Ron sighs, resigned to his fate, and says he'll get his things now and leave Hogwarts, because he's been expelled. Maggie Smith, in her role as the head of Gryffindor, delivers the line, "Not today, Mr. Weasley." How she delivers that line with dry wit and precision makes her a joy to watch. In the vernacular of Harry Potter-aged kids, Smith RULES.

Smith on why she committed to the film series: "It's very simple really. Harry Potter is my pension." (Quoted by Chloe Fox in "Spellbinding" on www.telegraph.co.uk, January 14, 2004.)

David Tennant as Bartemius Crouch, Jr. The son of Bartemius Crouch, Sr., the Minister of Magic, the son falls far from the tree: In the opening scene, we see him in the company of Peter "Wormtail" Pettigrew, Nagini, and the Dark Lord himself, Lord Voldemort. We know, then, that he's no good and up to no good, as well. As the storyline in *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* unfolds, it's clear that the son is not merely a bad apple but rotten to the core, as well.

David Tennant gives an outstanding performance; regrettably, he gets few scenes but still manages to steal the show. As actor Daniel Radcliffe told *SFX Magazine*, "I'll tell you what—I wish there was more of David Tennant in *Goblet of Fire*. He plays Barty Crouch, Jr. He only got a few scenes and he's brilliant in all of them. He's so absolutely, fantastically watchable. . . . I would love to work with him again. He's also the nicest person."

Verne Troyer as Griphook the Goblin. Best known for his role as "Mini Me" in the Austin Powers films, Troyer has only a brief appearance in one scene, when Harry Potter and Rubens Hagrid go to Gringotts to make withdrawals. Harry needs cash for school supplies and Hagrid needs to pick up a special package on the instruction of Albus Dumbledore.

Troyer's walk-through is all too brief (more, please, about the Gringotts' goblins). Though Troyer is diminutive in real life, he's a giant of an actor.

Julie Walters as Molly Weasley. The mother that Harry Potter never had, Molly Weasley is the wife of Arthur Weasley and the mother of six boys and one daughter, all of whom have gone to or are currently enrolled in Hogwarts. As longtime readers know, there's more to her than meets the eye—particularly obvious in book five—and her role becomes increasingly more visible in each book.

Professor Snape is portrayed by Rowling as a very skilled potions master at Hogwarts, but his career aim is to teach Defense against the Dark Arts, which tells us much about the character and his nature.

Rickman plays this role in a controlled, understated manner. The word *precision* comes to mind when I think of how he portrays Snape. He is in total control of his lines and delivers them exactly.

In the first book, Snape tells his first-year class about the beauty of potion-making, a subtle scene in which we begin to understand why he harbors such love for this difficult, exacting craft. In the film (scene 14 on the DVD), Rickman bursts in on his class and carefully, deliberately, performs this scene with understated control. He is clearly in command and as an actor delivers his lines with confidence, with the students hanging on his every word.

Rickman brings his considerable acting talents to bear in his interpretation of Snape—one that's a standout in a film series filled with memorable characters played by good and great actors.

Rickman on the first Harry Potter film: "It looked tremendous to me. I think the thing is that whenever . . . I was on the set and children were coming in and visiting, the endless refrain was, 'Wow! It's just like the book!' And I think that was certainly Chris Columbus's and the producers' aim: to be faithful to J. K. Rowling's imagination. And I think, given the fact that at the end of the screening last night the entire cinema stood up and cheered, I guess they've done it!" (Quoted by Tim Sebastian on BBC Hardtalk, November 7, 2001.)

Fiona Shaw as Petunia Dursley. The perfect wife for Vernon Dursley—she is similarly unimaginative and excessively concerned with appearances, though blinded to the shortcomings of their obnoxious son. Aunt Petunia is pure caricature: the class-conscious housewife who dotes excessively on her son and whose job is to support her husband blindly.

Fiona Shaw steps into this role and becomes Petunia Dursley, convincing us that, like her husband, all is not right in the world unless she finds continual fault with nephew Harry Potter, whom she resents.

A first-class, professional performance by Shaw complements the performances by actors Richard Griffiths and Harry Melling.

Shaw on her role: "Bad? Me? No, but I am very honoured to be Aunt Petunia. It is great to be part of a cultural touchstone, the film's very exciting and beautifully directed by Christopher Columbus." (Quoted from "Harry Potter's Wicked Aunt" in www.empireonline.co.uk, November 28, 2000.)

Maggie Smith as Professor Minerva McGonagall. As Rowling has pointed out in interviews, McGonagall is a powerful witch. The head of Gryffindor house, she is a key figure at Hogwarts.

appear as unsympathetic and such a know-it-all that we as viewers would find her off-putting, like Ron Weasley does in his initial meetings with her. But in time a grudging friendship between them develops into a bona fide friendship, and she, Ron, and Harry become inseparable.

Emma Watson is brilliant as Hermione Granger. The initial scene with her on the train as she first meets Harry and Ron tells us everything we need to know about her interpretation of the character. We are in good hands. Watson is an endearing know-it-all, who is initially an aggravation, subsequently an annoyance that borders on grating, and finally one who realizes when to obey the rules and when to break them (Percy Weasley, take note!).

Watson is an accomplished young actress who has to display a wide range of acting skills to pull off this challenging role. Fortunately for the film series, she is not only up to the challenge but throws herself into her role with unbridled enthusiasm.

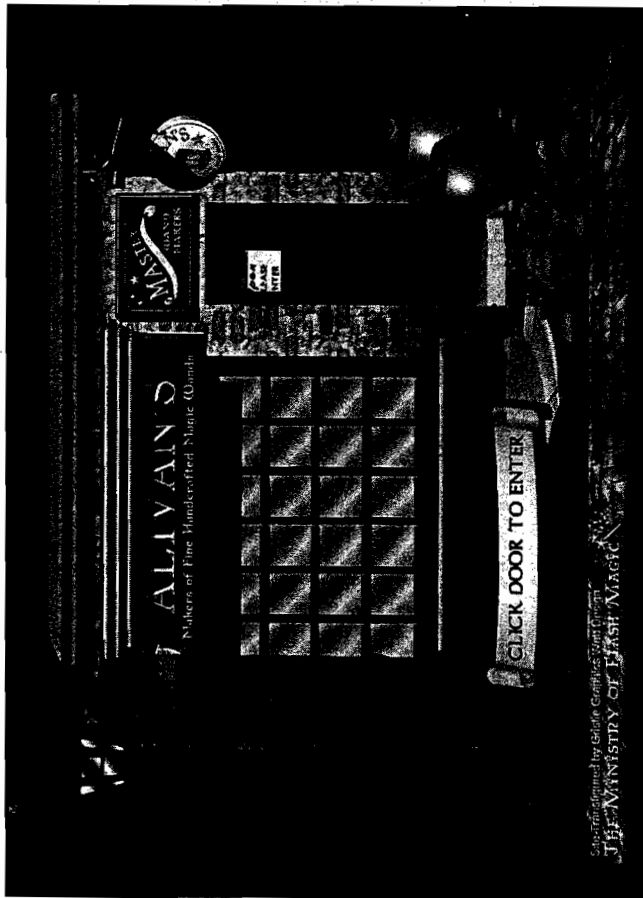
Watson on what she doesn't like about her character: "She's a bit too [concerned with] rules. She overdoes it when Harry gets the Firebolt and she seeks out Professor McGonagall. She was obviously worried, but I probably would've had a talk with my friend before I sought out a teacher." (Quoted from "Emma Watson: Hermione" in *Nickelodeon Magazine*, October 30, 2001.)

Mark Williams as Arthur Weasley. The husband of Molly Weasley, Arthur is an employee at the Ministry of Magic, which gives us glimpses into its inner workings. Williams plays the role to perfection, whether it's showing delight and surprise when discovering that his sons have brought Harry Potter to his home as they all gather around the kitchen table for a hearty breakfast, or his childlike curiosity when he discovers that Ron, George, and Fred took his enchanted Ford Anglia for an unauthorized flight; he excitedly asks them how it went, and then assumes a mock-angry tone after being chided by his wife, who really runs the house and rules the roost.

Williams on his role: "It's a great film to work on. It's like all your favorite actors. Julie Walters is my wife, which is fantastic!" (Quoted from the *Johnny Vaughan Show* on BBC 1, September 23, 2002.)

Bonnie Wright as Ginny Weasley. The only daughter of Arthur and Molly Weasley, Ginny is initially awestruck when first encountering Harry up close, when she sees him at the family breakfast table. It turns out that she had been talking about Harry all summer to her bemused brother Ron, who says a little talk about Harry is okay, but she had become tedious, going on endlessly about poor Harry.

As with other secondary characters in the series, Ginny grows up. The speechless schoolgirl in the first film becomes a key figure in the second film, as she becomes more confident in herself—a difficult thing to do when you've been raised in a family of boys with no older sister to confide in.



Screenshot of Alivans.com, a webstore that sells wands

Julie Walters plays well the part of Molly Weasley. She steps into the role and becomes the character. An endearing interpretation, Walters portrays Molly exactly as Rowling has written her—she runs the Weasley household, lays down the law with her own children, dotes on Harry Potter, and can still be like a giddy schoolgirl when in the presence of someone famous and flamboyant like Gilderoy Lockhart. (Ron is right: She fancies Lockhart, but of course downplays that notion.)

Hers is a solid performance that in the films to come will require rising to the occasion and reaching new heights of character interpretation.

Walters on her role: "Since playing Mrs. Weasley in *Harry Potter*, I've had a lot of children asking me for autographs. But usually it is women who say, 'I did an Open University course after seeing *Educating Rita*.' . . . Anyway, we live a very ordinary life so we don't come into contact with the starry thing. We live in a small community where everyone knows us and I'm just the local actress who opens the fetes. . . ." (Quoted from "The Actress Next Door" by an uncredited staff writer on www.theage.com.au, October 11, 2003.)

Emma Watson as Hermione Granger. The only character that Rowling has admitted is drawn from a real person, Hermione is a "swot," a brainy girl who uses her intelligence to mask her insecurities. It's a portrait of Rowling herself, who in high school was a prefect, as is Hermione in book five.

The danger for any young actress attempting this role is striking the right balance, achieving the right tone. If played too tightly, Granger would

Bonnie Wright strikes no wrong tones in her interpretation of Ginny Weasley. A loyal Gryffindor to the core, as are her brothers and Harry Potter, Ginny is a character to watch—as is the talented Bonnie Wright.

Wright on stardom: "I have had a few people recognise me in public. But I wouldn't like everybody to recognise me. I can still walk across the street and not be noticed. If I was Daniel Radcliffe I think I would find it much harder to deal with." (Quoted from "BBCi Films: Bonnie Wright. *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*," an interview conducted by Jamie Russell, undated.)

*The Press Conference: J. K. Rowling,
Stephen King, and John Irving Read from
Their Books at Radio City Music Hall
(August 1-2, 2006)*

I feel like I've just been told the Beatles and the Stones are warming up for me.

—J. K. Rowling at the press conference, after both Stephen King and John Irving observed that they were the “warm-up dance” for her

In comparison to other entertainment industries, book publishing is the smallest of worlds; so small, in fact, that when disaster struck one of its most prominent practitioners, the reverberations were felt halfway around the world. This is exactly what happened on June 19, 1999, when the media reported that Maine writer Stephen King had been rushed to the hospital after being struck by a van near his summer home in Center Lovell, Maine.

As King recounted in an essay titled “On Living,” in *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*, he was “actually lying in death’s doorway” as a helicopter whisked him away to Central Maine Medical Center in Lewiston.

During the long and painful period that followed—known as physical therapy to those who haven’t experienced it, and pain and torture to those who have, according to King—he couldn’t write but he could read.

If memory serves, one of the long books that took him away from his

collective fan base of all three authors effectively used the Internet to really get the word out. On their respective websites, the authors put the word out, as well.

Major Harry Potter fan websites devoted to J. K. Rowling picked up the story and, predictably, were deluged with requests for more information. The Leaky Cauldron, devoted to Rowling, had gotten frantic emails from fans wanting to know the date of the engagement and when tickets would be available. Sue Upton of The Leaky Cauldron wrote, "We CANNOT get you tickets and do not yet know HOW to get tickets—there isn't even a set date yet, so please stop e-mailing. As soon as we know, you'll know!" Moreover, the site reported, "We do NOT know what book Jo will be reading from, and are working to find out more."

Ticket prices, Sue wrote, would "range from \$12.50 to \$100 apiece, with \$1,000 family packages including four orchestra seats and a signed book from each of the authors."

At ten o'clock on May 12, 2006, Ticketmaster began selling tickets for both nights of readings set for August 1 and 2. By that time, more information had been made available, but not enough to satiate Potter fans: there would be surprise guests for both nights to introduce each writer; a press conference would be held at 10:00 A.M. on the 1st, for which media credentials were checked out (professional media only); no photography would be allowed during the reading itself; and, finally, those who paid for \$1,000 tickets (500 seats per night) in the prime orchestra section would be allowed to e-mail a question to Scholastic, who would then cull a dozen to be answered by the authors at the event itself.

Not surprisingly, fans e-mailed Harry Potter websites with requests for more information. Would there be an official book signing? Would there be a webcast? Could a member from a prominent fan website get something signed by Rowling? Does anyone know where Rowling would be staying? Can someone at the website get a backstage pass? Would there be a red carpet and an opportunity to perhaps get a closer glimpse of Rowling and perhaps a signature? And can we bring cameras?

The short answer to all of those questions: no.

You buy a ticket and get the best seat you can afford; anything else would be a bonus. If you were lucky, well, you might just get an autograph—if you knew where to hang out.

In addition to the press conference and the two nights of readings, LeakyMug (the Leaky Cauldron website) and Mugglenet.com arranged with Barnes & Noble at Union Square to hold a podcast with its principals, which would follow on the heels of a similar podcast held on July 29 in Las Vegas at the J.W. Marriott Resort & Spa, where 1,200 fans would show up to attend Lumos 2006, a Harry Potter symposium.

pain and misery was one of J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter novels, which she had sent him, probably *Harry Potter and Prisoner of Azkaban*.

King later sang her praises and wrote informed reviews of *Goblet of Fire* and *Order of the Phoenix*, returning the favor.

In October 2005, Stephen King and John Irving wrote to J. K. Rowling, inviting her to come to the U.S. and, to benefit charity, read from a Harry Potter novel at Radio City Music Hall. Rowling quickly agreed. There would be two nights of readings; the first night would benefit King's own Haven Foundation, and the second night would benefit a favorite of Rowling's, Doctors Without Borders (Médecins Sans Frontières), which had first come to her attention when she worked for Amnesty International.

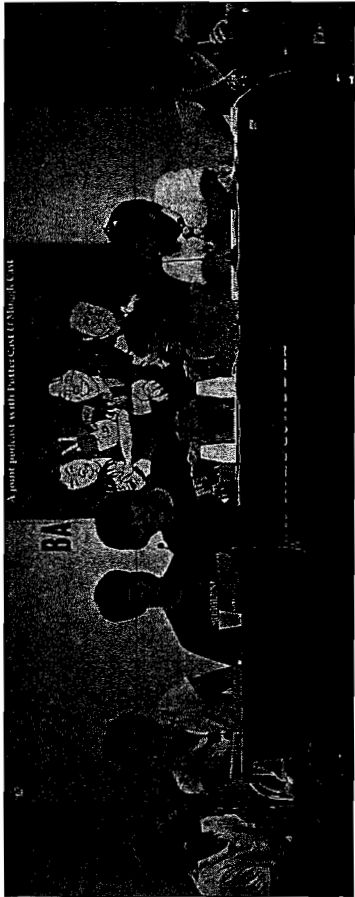
Stephen King commented: "This is like a dream come true for me. It's a chance for me to read with two great writers while supporting two very deserving organizations at the same time. I think this is going to be quite an event and, worthy causes aside, it is a chance for fans to see some amazing imaginations at work, live and in person, on one of America's greatest stages."

John Irving commented: "I first met Stephen King at a reading—another charitable event. The writer André Dubus had been hit by a car while assisting a fallen motorcyclist. Dubus lost use of both legs; he had no medical insurance. I organized a series of readings at the Charles Hotel in Cambridge, Massachusetts, to raise money to pay for his hospitalization and rehabilitation. One winter night, in 1981, I read with Stephen. We've been friends ever since. He recently gave a charitable reading for an elementary school my wife and I co-founded in Manchester, Vermont. I said I would read for his charity of choice in return, and together we wrote to J. K. Rowling and asked her to join us. I not only look forward to the reading; I am looking forward to meeting Ms. Rowling, whom I credit with introducing an entire generation of readers to long, complicated, plotted novels."

Rowling commented: "For me, this was a unique opportunity to raise money for two great, important causes; read to American fans for the first time in six years; and get to meet and read alongside Stephen King and John Irving. Stephen pretended to be in suspense about my answer, but frankly, this was easily one of the most enticing propositions ever put to me in an envelope."

On May 10, 2006, the *New York Times* ran a brief story headlined, "J. K. Rowling Is Coming to New York for Charity Reading." In the body of the piece, it added that she would join "Stephen King and John Irving at a charity reading at Radio City Music Hall."

As Scholastic (Rowling's publisher) and Simon & Schuster (King's and Irving's publisher) got the word out through the usual publicity channels, the



The two leading Harry Potter fan websites gather for an August 2, 2006, podcast at Barnes & Noble's Union Square store, drawing more than one thousand fans. From left to right: Mugglenet.com's Andrew Sims, Jamie Lawrence, Emerson Spartz (founder/webmaster), and Ben Schoen; The Leaky Cauldron's Sue Upton, John Noe, and Melissa Anelli.

Also ongoing at the time: Scholastic had sent key members of two Harry Potter fan websites—The Leaky Cauldron and Mugglenet.com—on the road, along with one of their editors, Cheryl Klein, to promote the release of the sixth Harry Potter novel, which had just been published in trade paperback.

This was promising to be two days and nights to remember.

For Rowling fans, her arrival in the Big Apple was big news, but for Muggles in the city, the record heat wave—with temperatures nearing 100 and the power grid taxed to the max—got the headlines. Meanwhile, members of the world's media set up in a hallway at Radio City Music Hall, where Rowling and her fellow authors would field questions at a press conference that Scholastic estimated would run an hour.

To insure the press conference would run smoothly, Scholastic issued coordinating instructions before the event by e-mail to the invited media, who were told to arrive no earlier than 8:30 A.M. but no later than 9:30 A.M., when the doors would close.

Anxious to get a good seat or a good camera position, anxious to get out of the heat and into the air-conditioned coolness of Radio City Music Hall, and anxious to avail themselves of what was an enticing spread of breakfast food and drink (coffee, orange juice, fruits, donuts, bagels, and assorted pastries), news/food hungry media hounds were in place and ready at 10:00 A.M., when the press conference was scheduled to start.

According to the folders handed out to the media, three people would speak before the floor would be opened up for general questions: Billy DiMichele of Scholastic (the event organizer), Jack Romanos (president and CEO of Simon and Schuster, the book publisher for King and Irving), and Dick Robinson (president and CEO of Scholastic, the book publisher for



John Irving, J. K. Rowling, and Stephen King at a press conference on August 1, 2006

Rowling). At the tail end of the press conference, time would be allotted to photographers for the staged photo opportunity.

Billy DiMichele set the stage, so to speak, by talking about the event in terms of Stephen King's involvement, noting, "I really doubt there's another author who could have conceived of a fundraiser of this scale and delivered on that vision. It's precisely that combination of vision and ambition that placed Stephen King on the nation's best-seller lists, and he's been there since 1973, which led him to publish more than 40 memorable books and made him the recipient of the National Book Foundation medal for Distinguished Contribution of American Letters.

"That said, it's my privilege and an honor to introduce a man who himself has the magic of Harry, the heart of Carrie, and like Garp is a real Yankee—Stephen King."

A round of polite applause.

"One of America's most innovative and talented novelists with a string of best-sellers, John Irving tackles topics ranging from feminism and religion to wrestling, tattooing, and New England life. *The World According to Garp* launched him into the stratosphere of authors; he continues to share his humor and intelligence with such works as *The Cider House Rules*, *A Prayer for Owen Meany*, *The Fourth Hand*, and most



Stephen King applauds after being introduced by Dick Robinson (of Scholastic books).

liberated. I can just resolve the story now, and it's fun—fun in a way that it hasn't been before because finally I'm doing my resolution. I think some people will loathe it and some will love it, but that's the way it should be.¹

A question for King: How much money do you expect to raise for your respective charities?

King: I think we're going to be able to raise at least \$250,000 for each charity, which for three people who write books is a lot of money. When we set out to do this, we decided that we would do two nights; one to benefit the charity of my choice, Haven Foundation, to raise money for freelance artists who find themselves after catastrophic accidents and diseases with no resources for themselves, and one designated by Jo, Doctors Without Borders, and she can talk very cogently about that.²

As I say, all of this came out of the fact that last year I read for John's charity, which was Maple Street School in Vermont, and he said he would read for me. And so while I read for a small school, I dragged him to Radio City Music Hall, and he came along!

A general question for all three authors: What advice do you have for young people wanting to become writers?

Rowling: The first thing you should do is read. By reading you'll not only increase your vocabulary, but you'll learn what kind of writing you like and learn how to analyze it. And the other thing is to accept that you'll waste a lot of trees.³

Irving: I certainly support reading. If you're lucky enough to be a writer, as you get older, you find that you'd rather write than read. So you better have read a lot when you're young because the more you write, you develop the capacity to spend more hours of the days doing that. For the last ten or 15 years, I found ways to be writing almost all of the time, and I'm not really as good a reader as I used to be.⁴

I'm grateful that, as Jo said, I read some writers—Charles Dickens, especially—who became the model of the form for me.

King: You have to read, and you have to hold out hope, too, because as a young writer you have to remember that we will all die.⁵

A question for Rowling: What will you miss most about the Harry Potter series?

Rowling: Everything. I've loved writing it. I will miss it hugely, but I always planned seven books and this particular ending, so if I get through it and do what I meant to do when I first committed to this story, then I'll be proud.

recently, *Until I Find You: A Novel*. He has been honored by a list of prestigious awards, but the one that may surprise you is that he is an inductee in the National Wrestling Hall of Fame. Ladies and gentlemen, John Irving."

Again, polite applause, after which Dick Robinson spoke, introducing his most famous and bankable author, J. K. Rowling.

"I'm Dick Robinson of Scholastic, the lucky U.S. publisher of Harry Potter, the best known, best-loved character on planet Earth, and of J. K. Rowling, Harry's brilliant creator.

"From the moment I met Jo, then unknown, eight years ago, I was touched by her graceful confidence, born of her sure foreknowledge that Harry Potter would be one of literature's great characters. I was also struck by her artist's supreme gift of matchless concentration, the mind completely and at all times absorbed in the consistency of the whole seven-book story that she had imagined from the beginning.

"And not only was her commitment to the developing story absolute, but it was accompanied by a parallel of readers. Her story and its readers have been linked in her mind from the beginning, even as the readers grow older, and the story artfully unfolds through the years.

"Our company is thought of by teachers, parents, and children as a place to find great stories and great books to help you read and learn. Nothing we have done in 86 years, however, matches the impact of Harry Potter opening millions of minds to a great story and making reading the best way to learn about yourself. For all of this, thank you, Jo Rowling."

Polite applause, then questions were fielded from the assembled press corps. (Note: I've reworded the questions posed, since some of them were unintelligible.)

A question for Rowling: What can you tell us about the progress of the seventh, and last, Harry Potter novel?

Rowling: I'm well into the writing of it now. There's so much I could say. To an extent, the pressure's off because it's the last book, so I feel quite



J. K. Rowling looks at Stephen King as he answers a question at the press conference.

it in a drawer. I ended up publishing it only because of a contractual issue . . . well, things happen. I felt like I had to publish the book, and I did, and I did it with a lot of distress because I felt the audience would think, "Oh, this is the most dreadful thing," but they loved it. John, I think that you said your son is reading it now, and he seems to be liking it a lot and I'm thinking, "My goodness!"

But the thing is, I've written other books where the strangest things happen. I wrote a book called *The Dead Zone* which begins with a character named Greg Stillson. In the prologue, he kicks a dog to death in the doorway, and I wanted to establish this character as a real awful person in the beginning who covers it with this cheerful, smiling, happy "Hey, I'm just a good ol' fella" kind of Willie Stark kind of thing going on, and I got more letters, "How can you do that to that dog?"

You write people back and you want to be nice to them and you say, "I'm sorry you don't like that," and I'm thinking to myself: Number one, it was a dog, not a person, and number two, the dog wasn't even real—I made that dog up. That was a fake dog, a fictional dog. But people get very involved, and I get involved too, and I've written books and I know what Jo has been through. And I can tell you too that when I read *The World According to Garp*, there's a scene in that book that is so distressing to me that it's one of the few times I did not sleep that night. And I'm case-hardened. I've read a lot of books, but I spent that night awake. Thanks very much, John.

For King or Irving: Do either of you have advice for Rowling as she comes to the end of her series?

Rowling: [looking at King] Kill him!

King: Do I have any advice? I just want the story to be fair—that's what I always want. I want to read the book. I love that series. I want to read the book and I have total confidence because I read the other books. Man, I'm just up for it, that's all.⁹

Irving: My fingers are crossed for Harry, that's all. I'm just hoping.

To Rowling: Why did you choose Doctors Without Borders as your charity choice, and why have you not been in the U.S. for six years?¹⁰

Rowling: The reason I wanted to nominate Doctors Without Borders (which is Médecins Sans Frontières in Britain) is that I used to work for Amnesty International, and that's when I first came across the organization. I noticed that every time there was a situation, like the war in Lebanon, Doctors Without Borders were some of the first people on the ground. They were a

Then I'll probably go through a mourning period and then have to give something else a try.⁶

A question for King: Fiction is often reflective of a particular community area. Is that true for you?

King: I think we all have a tendency to write about places that we know best. It's where we feel most comfortable and grounded.⁷

Writing feels to me like being on a tightrope, anyway.

A question for all three authors: What are your thoughts on killing off your characters?

Rowling: John's killed off more than I have, so I think he should go first.

Irving: Because I never begin writing a novel until I know the major emotional things that happen in it, especially what happens at the end, I have a kind of casualty list of which characters make it and which characters don't before I write the first word. So that process of deliberation that sometimes precedes the writing of a novel by as much as a year or 18 months means that by the time I get to write those death scenes, I've lived through the lives and deaths of those characters for many months, sometimes several years. Therefore, I'm not truly emotionally affected when it comes to writing those scenes. It's as if they've already happened and I'm just remembering things. But I think that's a direct result of my needing to know the ending of the story before I ever imagine where it might begin.

Rowling: I understand why an author would kill a character from a point of view of not allowing others to continue writing after the original author. I don't always enjoy killing my characters. I didn't enjoy killing the character who died at the end of book six. I'm being discreet just in case anyone hasn't finished the book. I really didn't enjoy doing that, but I had been planning that for years. As John says, it wasn't quite as poignant as you might imagine. I'd already done my grieving when it actually came to writing it.⁸

King: I don't enjoy it either, and I don't always know. I don't plan the books out very clearly. There are writers who plan and I think there are people who fire missiles the way that the United States fires missiles. I fire them the way Hezbollah fires missiles: I have a certain idea of where they're going to land, but if they get within 12 miles one way or another, I'm happy. I wrote a book called *Cujo* and it's about a mother and a son trapped in a car by a rabid dog. I thought I had a pretty good idea of what was going to happen at the end. I thought that the little boy would be okay, but the little boy *wasn't* okay, and that really shook me.

I had a book called *Pet Sematary* that disturbed me so much that I put

say in the case of this reading I love the idea of reading with Steve and Jo in this wonderful space, but I'm a little intimidated by the age of the audience—it's not my usual audience.¹²

Rowling: I feel like I've just been told the Beatles and the Stones are warming up for me.

To tell you the truth I'm not that comfortable reading my own work, and that's why I'm going to be doing a shorter reading tonight and taking some questions. I do think that the people who are coming to hear me read would probably rather ask questions than hear me do a long reading. I would like to think so anyway because I'm not very comfortable doing it. I don't think I'm particularly good at reading.¹³

A question for Rowling: How do you feel when your readers accuse you of being a sadist, and how do you feel about wrapping up the series?

Rowling: When fans accuse me of sadism, which doesn't happen that often, I feel I'm toughening them up to go on and read John and Stephen's books. They've got to be toughened up somehow. It's a cruel literary world out there, so I'm doing them a favor.

How do I feel about the series ending? On the one hand, I am going to feel sad. Harry's been an enormous part of my life and it's been quite a turbulent phase of my life as well; he was always a constant. So there will be a sense of bereavement, but there will also be a sense of liberation because there are pressures involved in writing something this popular; and wonderful though it's been, I think that there will also be a certain freedom in escaping that particular part of writing Harry Potter.

The final question, posed to Rowling: What's next in terms of your writing?

Rowling: I have a shorter book for children that's half written, so I think I'll probably go to that next.¹⁴

It was 40 minutes past the hour and, with the Q&A finished, the authors stood up to pose for the cameras. Photographers surged forward with digital cameras and began firing a blinding barrage of light, catching all three authors by surprise. As photographers shouted, giving stage direction ("Hey, Jo!" and "Look this way, Jo!"), and as the writers looked like deer in the headlights, it became obvious that with each passing minute, what was supposed to be a sedate photo opportunity had turned into a melee.

The three authors were gobsmailed by the relentless barrage of flashguns firing, and after a few minutes, they were mercifully ushered off stage through a side door to their right, and the press conference officially ended.

very effective organization, and also as the name clearly states, it doesn't matter what your religious affiliation is, it doesn't matter what your ethnic group is, it doesn't matter what your circumstance is. If you are physically in need they will help you or do everything they can to help you. So they've been an organization I've always supported financially, since having money and having made money, and I thought that if we were doing one great charity that deals with a specific group, I thought it would be great if we did a charity that deals literally with the world.

[As for my long absence,] you didn't say anything wrong. I absolutely love coming here, and I particularly love coming to New York—it's one of my favorite cities. But during that six years I've been pregnant twice, I've had small children, and that's really why we weren't doing the long flights and the tours. They're old enough to travel now. So it's great to be back.

To Rowling, posed by a child reporter from Time magazine: In book six, why did [a main character] have to die?

Rowling: I did an interview last year in which I was asked this question. In the genre in which I'm writing, you usually find that the hero has to go on alone. There comes a point when his support falls away and to be truly heroic he has to act alone. Harry is not completely alone; he still has his two faithful sidekicks. So that's why. In these sort of epic sagas, the hero eventually has to fight alone.¹¹

To Rowling: Is the final book going to be different from its predecessors?

Rowling: It is different to an extent. The essential plot is what I've always planned when working toward the end. But a couple of characters I expected to survive have died and one character got a reprieve, so there have been some fairly major changes, I suppose.

To all three authors: Are you comfortable reading your own work onstage?

King: I don't mind reading my own work. I know it best. That's fine. The challenge is to find something that can hold a broad audience.

Irving: My only discomfort with what I'm reading tonight is it's from something relatively old, something I've not read or been in touch with for a number of years, but Steve and I have talked about what we were going to read and we recognize that we see ourselves as the warm-up dance for Jo. We imagine that there's going to be mostly her audience there, and I don't think that Stephen King and John Irving generally write material that's terribly suitable for younger people. So Steve and I had to go looking for those occasionally more innocent moments in our earlier work, so to speak. So I would.

Azkaban, would be scheduled for publication in the U.K. on July 8, so the problem was compounded. U.S. fans began ordering significant quantities of the U.K. edition, since the U.S. edition wasn't scheduled for publication until September.

To Bloomsbury's and Scholastic's dismay, Web-savvy U.S. readers upset the delicate order of balance. The appetite for Harry Potter books was so great that Scholastic's marketing and sales plan were seriously undercut by the built-in delay in publication between the U.K. and U.S. editions—a problem they would finally correct with the fourth book, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*.

About Book Two

Contrary to popular belief, lightning *can* strike twice, but it's rare, and especially so in the book field where the promise of a first novel sometimes turns out to be an empty one. The writer, having said all he wanted to say in his first novel, cannot resist the siren call for a second book, which the publisher hopes will be just as, if not more, successful. Far too often, however, the second novel doesn't reach sales, or readers', expectations.

Part of Rowling's great genius in constructing the series was in biding her time. Until she had thoroughly explored her fictional world and knew exactly, book by book, what would happen and when, she refrained from publishing. Consequently, the first book got off to a necessarily slow start, with 113 of its 309 pages just to get Harry to Hogwarts, at which point the real fun begins and the book builds up its momentum, like a train streaking down the tracks at top speed.

In the second book in the series, two facts become obvious. Nothing in the first book is accidental. In other words, there are clues, seemingly innocuous, to what will become important in the books to follow. Also, Rowling dispensed with the back story—telling us who Harry Potter is and why he's so famous in the wizarding community—to get on with the main story. As a reviewer for *Booklist* put it, "The magical foundation so necessary in good fantasy [is] as expertly crafted here as in the first book."

By page 12 of the second novel, we know Harry Potter's got a problem on his hands because Dobby, a house-elf, visits him in his room at the Dursley residence to warn him not to come back to Hogwarts, and does everything in his considerable power to drive the point home.

Having established the main character, the supporting cast (Rubeus Hagrid, Ron Weasley, and Hermione Granger), and the faculty at Hogwarts, Rowling can concentrate on the story at hand. At Hogwarts, the Chamber of Secrets is the stuff of legend. It reportedly resides deep within the bowels of the school, undiscovered despite numerous searches over its more than thousand year history. Though the present faculty is quick to point out that talk of the Chamber of Secrets should be discounted, if not dismissed outright,

HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS

Dedication

"For Séan P. F. Harris, / Getaway driver and foul-weather friend."

This refers to her college pal, who is one of her best friends.

Background

Rowling submitted the manuscript for this book to her British publisher in early July 1997, two weeks after the U.K. publication of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*.

This second book in the series was published in the U.K. in July 1998, but wouldn't see publication in the U.S. until June 1999. The problem, as Scholastic soon discovered, was that some eager fans wouldn't wait for the U.S. edition; instead, they ordered the British edition from the U.K. division of Amazon.com, which undercut the sales of the U.S. edition.

To make matters worse, the third book in the series, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of*



"Harry Potter" (Taylor Kincaid, an employee at Barnes & Noble) takes a break from the hectic Potter Party.

the talk among the students is animated, especially when things take a somber tone with Hogwarts students turning to stone.

Does the Chamber of Secrets actually exist? And, if so, has someone opened it—presumably, the destined heir of Slytherin—to allow the fabled monster to escape and run amuck at Hogwarts? No one—living or dead—is spared. Animals, students, and even ghosts are all at risk, as pesky poltergeist Peeves warns everyone.

Readers love a good mystery wrapped within a well-told tale, and with her second book, Rowling doesn't disappoint. She, in fact, has written an engaging book series that promises to deliver more with each installment, as Harry Potter learns more about himself and his eventual place in the wizarding world.

In the second novel we also learn much more about the delightful wizarding world. We are taken to the enchanted home of the Weasleys, where clocks tell more than time, where dishes wash themselves, and the family garden is populated with talking gnomes, who must periodically be weeded out.

This book adds to the cast of memorable characters Gilderoy Lockhart, a flamboyant and excessively vain braggart who shows up with a flourish at a bookstore to sign copies of his many books, required texts for Hogwarts students, since he's the newest addition to its faculty. (His books are more fiction than fact, however!) We also learn more about Nearly Headless Nick, a ghost at Hogwarts who is certainly the most interesting of the lot. Add to that mix and an engaging assortment of new magical creatures, good and bad, and spiced with a delightful sense of humor throughout, and the end result is, as the British would say, a simply smashing read.

Of course, at the heart of the book is the mystery about the Chamber of Secrets, which must be solved by Harry Potter, who is still very much a fledgling student wizard, unsure of himself and his place in the magical world.

By the second book in the series, we know we are in good hands. Rowling has delivered the literary goods once again and whetted our appetite for the third novel, just as any good writer should.

Selected Reviews

Booklist: "Harry Potter's exploits during his second year at Hogwarts completely live up to the bewitching measure of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. The magical foundation so necessary in good fantasy [is] as expertly crafted here as in the first book."

Los Angeles Times: "*Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* is a wonderful sequel, as suspenseful, charming, and ultimately satisfying as its predecessor."

A Publishers Weekly starred review: "Fans who have been anxiously awaiting the return of young British wizard Harry Potter (and whose clamor caused the Stateside publication date to be moved up three months)

will be amazed afresh. And newcomers will likely join Harry's delighted legion of followers, for this tale is perhaps even more inventive than its predecessor, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. Picking up shortly after his first year at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, orphan Harry is spending the summer with his detestable Muggle (non-witch) aunt's family. Rowling briskly sets the action rolling with a mysterious warning from an elf named Dobby. The pace accelerates as Harry, now 12, is rescued from his bedroom imprisonment by his best friend Ron Weasley and his irrepressible older twin brothers in a flying car. Their school year gets off to a bad start when Harry and Ron crash-land the car at Hogwarts. More trouble soon follows, first from Harry's old nemesis, supercilious Draco Malfoy, then from a mysterious something that is petrifying Muggle-born students, culminating with Harry and Ron's friend Hermione. And once more, it's up to Harry to save the day. Rowling might be a Hogwarts graduate herself, for her ability to create such an engaging, imaginative, funny, and, above all, heart-pounding suspenseful yarn is nothing short of magical."

School Library Journal: "Fans of the phenomenally popular *Harry Potter* and *the Sorcerer's Stone* won't be disappointed when they rejoin Harry, now on break after finishing his first year at Hogwarts. The novel is marked throughout by the same sly and sophisticated humor found in the first book, along with inventive, new, matter-of-fact uses of magic that will once again have readers longing to emulate Harry and his wizard friends."

USA Today: "Those needing a bit of magic, morality, and mystical worlds can do no better than opening *Harry Potter* and *the Chamber of Secrets*. As she did in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, Rowling delivers plenty of ghoulish giggles. And in young Potter she has created a hero as resourceful, brave, and loyal as Luke Skywalker himself."

Wall Street Journal: "Harry's enchanted world is a refreshing break from the all-too-familiar settings of many of today's novels."

Awards (U.S. and U.K.)

American Library Association (ALA) Best Book for Young Adults (1999)

American Library Association (ALA) Notable Book

Booklist 1999 Editor's Choice

Booksellers Association/Bookseller Author of the Year 1998

British Book Awards (1998): Children's Book of the Year

FCBC Children's Book Award (1998): Overall winner, and Longer Novel

Category

Gold Medal Smarties Prize (1999)

National Book Award, U.K. (1999)

North East Book Award (1999)
North East Scotland Book Award (1998)
School Library Journal (1999), Best Book of the Year
Scottish Arts Council Children's Book Award (1999)
Whitaker's Platinum Book Award (2001)